In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قال الله تعالى:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

(*Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* 33:33).

Prophetic traditions mentioned in both in Sunnī and Shī'ah authoritative reference books of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'an) have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively refer to the People of the Cloak [*ahl al-kisā'*], viz. Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn ('a) as the *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Household). For instance, refer to the following references: *Sunnī:* Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), *al-Musnad*, 1:231; 4:107; 6:292, 304; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130; Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al.; Al-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), *Al-Dhuriyyah al-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108; Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 AH), *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā'*, 5:108; 113; Al-Ḥakīm al-Nayshābūrī (d. 405 AH), *Al-Mustadrak 'ala' ṣ-Ṣahīḥāyn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146-147; Al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH), *Al-Burhān*, p. 197; Ibn Hājar al-Asqalānī (d. 852 AH), *Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:104.

Shī'ah: Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, 1:287; Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), *Al-Imāmah wa' t-Tabṣīrah*, p. 47, *ḥadīth* 29; Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH), *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, pp. 35, 37; Al-Ṣādūq (d. 381 AH), *Al-Khiṣāl*, pp. 403, 550; Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH), *Al-Amalī*, *ḥadīth* 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following books of *tafsīr*: Al-Jassās (d. 370 AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH), *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*; Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Masīr*; Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), *Al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Tha'labī (d. 825 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Ṭabarī (d. 875 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*; Al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*; Al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Tafsīr*; Furt al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Tafsīr* at the margin of the exegesis of *Sūrat al-Nisā'* verse 59; Al-Ṭabarsī (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayān*, as well as many other sources.

Excerpts from
A Guide to the Truth

قال رسول الله ﷺ:

"إني تاركُ فيكُمُ الثَقلين: كتاب الله، وعترتي أهلَ بيتي، ما إن تمسكتُم بهما لن تضلوا أبداً وأَنَّهُما لَن يَفترِقا حتّى يردا عَليَّ الحوضَ"

The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) said: "Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itratī*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some references:

- Al-Ḥākim an-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak 'alā'ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533
- Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book 31, *h□adīth*s 5920-3
- At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *h□adīth*s 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219
- An-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, *h□adīth* 79
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190
- Ibn al-'Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277
- Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209
- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 6, p. 199

Naṣīr ad-Dīn al-Albanī, *Silsilāt al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Ad-Dār aṣ-Ṣalāfiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358

Excerpts from
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(***Questions and Answers concerning Shiite Beliefs***)

By:
Ja'far Subhāni

Translated by:
Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azīz

Cultural Affairs Department,
The Ahl al-Bayt (a) World Assembly

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PREFACE

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the Muslim *ummah* with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of Imāms of the Prophet's Household (*'a*), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defense of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shī'ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shī'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (*'a*) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣ*).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Ayatollah Shaykh Ja'far Subhāni the author of the present book, and Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azīz, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office.

Cultural Affairs Department
The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

Chapter One: The History and Development of Shiism

1- The Origins of Shiism

Question: There are diverse theories and opinions regarding the origins of Shiism. Would you please elaborate on when Shiism came into being?

Response: These kinds of questions are usually asked with respect to theological schools of thought and Islāmic sects that appeared after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s). For instance, people ask when the Ashʿarite sect came into being. In response, they say that the Ashʿarite sect is a theological school of thought whose foundations were laid by Abū al-Hassan Ashʿari (260-324 AH) at the beginning of the fourth century AH. This sect is juxtaposed with another theological school of thought, the Muʿtazilite sect, which was founded by Wāsil bin ʿAtā (80-130 AH), a student of Hassan Basrī (110 AH). In cases like these, it is possible to ascertain a specific period of the emergence of a particular religious sect.

This assertion also holds true in regard to schools of Islamic jurisprudence: Hanafism was founded by Abū Hanīfah (80-150 AH) and Shāfeism by Muhammad bin Idrīs Shāfiʿī (150-204 AH). Likewise, other schools of Islāmic jurisprudence also have specific times of appearance. But Shiism is not a theological and juristic school of thought which appeared after the advent of Islām and after the the Noble Prophet (s) departed this life. Rather, its emergence is synchronous with that of Islām. In truth, Shiism is the very same Islam which

Allah's Prophet (s) conveyed from the Almighty to mankind, one of whose teachings is the continuation of divine leadership and the Imamate through a man appointed by Allah and introduced to the people by the Noble Prophet (s). This basic principle, which is a guarantee for the continued existence of Islām and forms the kernel of Shiism, was pronounced by the Noble Prophet (s) himself during the era of his prophetic mission. A number of his companions consented to the Imamate and remained true to their pledge after the sad demise of Allah's Messenger (s). These people were the pioneers of Shiism during and after the era of the Noble Prophet (s). But another group of the Prophet's (s) companions deliberately disregarded this fundamental principle and conjectured that leadership pertained to a person other than the one introduced by the Noble Prophet (s).

In this sense, Shiism has no other roots save Islām and no other reality except this creed. Also, the principle of Divine appointment of the leader and Imām is part and parcel of Islāmic teachings and it was pronounced during the era of the Noble Prophet's (s) life.

The Rational Way of Selecting a Leader

Before we refer to books of Hadīth and history, we will initially discuss the procedure of establishing an Islāmic government after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s). Did Allah's Messenger (s), before departing this temporal life, choose a specific person to lead the Islāmic community and manage its affairs or did he entrust the

duty of selecting a [successor and] leader to the Muhājirīn[1] and the Ansār[2]?

Social considerations clearly indicate and prove that the Noble Prophet (s) chose someone who would succeed him to lead the Islāmic community and that he in this regard preferred to execute Allah's orders rather than comply with the community's choice, because by the time he was departing this temporal life, three strong and powerful enemies [namely] the fire worshipping Zoroastrians on the east, Roman Christians on the west and cunning hypocrites who had social power and roots inside the Islāmic community, as is indicated by many Qur'ānic verses in various chapters, threatened the Islāmic community. In such circumstances, the interests of the Islāmic community called for the Noble Prophet (s) to choose a powerful, erudite, ascetic and righteous man to lead the Islāmic community. Allah's messenger had to seal the issue of leadership by the time he departed this temporal life by choosing a man who would command all forces to safeguard Islām and confront the aforementioned triangle of enemies. Despite all this, if he had kept quiet in this regard, an additional problem of internal disagreements would have arisen inside the Islāmic community and this would have led to civil war. Taking these historical realities into consideration, divine appointment takes priority over [people's] election.

1. Meccans who had emigrated to Medīnah together with the Noble Prophet (s).
2. Medīnans who welcomed, helped and supported the Noble Prophet (s) and those who had emigrated with him.

In other words, there are no more than two theories with respect to the procedure of selecting a leader [of the Islāmic community]; one is the theory of divine appointment and the other is election by the Muhājirīn and the Ansār. In this case, we will carefully and thoroughly examine the Noble Prophet's (s) point of view, because this issue revolves around **three theories, that:**

1- The Noble Prophet (s) never said anything regarding the procedure of selecting a leader after his demise.

2- He (s) entrusted the issue of selecting a leader to a consultative council.

3- He (s) chose an eligible leader from among the people he had trained and instructed.

The first theory is not compatible with Islām because it is not a personal creed and its teachings are not limited to individual worship and praying, but it is a comprehensive doctrine which makes man needless of any other kind of code of law, and it will move forward in a self-sufficient manner till the end of the world. The conveyor of such a religion cannot afford to remain silent and indifferent with respect to issues of public authority and administration, which is a guarantee for the continued existence of religion.

The second theory is, to a certain extent, acceptable, and it is that the Noble Prophet (s) had a positive standpoint and was not apathetic with regard to affairs of public authority and management. But if the procedure of selecting a leader and a government was to be carried out on the basis of consultation, the Noble Prophet (s) would have hinted at this in his words, and he must have explicated the

conditions and criteria of consultation in a precise way. In order to teach Muslims [the procedure of selecting a leader through consultation], he should have carried it out in a practical way throughout the course of his lifetime so that Muslims should not be confused and perplexed with regard to it after his departure, whereas explicit injunctions in this regard are not found in his words, Hadīths and history. Even after the [death of the] first caliph, the procedure of selecting a caliph was not usually carried out on the basis of consultation, but a departing caliph used to appoint an individual who would take up the reins of power after him.

Public authority and administration in Islām is not a short and brief chapter which ends which the one sentence

"And their affairs are by council among themselves".[1]

Rather, it embraces comprehensive sections of divine law and [other] matters which call for the Noble Prophet (s) to explicate its details and conditions.

Naturally, the third theory is more acceptable than the first two, and fortuitously, the Noble Prophet's sayings and life history clearly prove that he chose an eligible leader from among the people he had trained and instructed.

After this social analysis, we will now proceed to respond to questions from the viewpoint of Hadīth and history.

1- Shī'ah in the Words of Allah's Prophet (s)

Calling 'Ali's followers Shī'ah began during the lifetime of the Noble Prophet (s) himself. There are many Hadīths

1. *Sūrat al-Shūrā (Council):* 38.

which indicate that the Noble Prophet (s) gave this name to the followers of ‘Alī (‘a). Scholars of Hadīth and interpreters of the Holy Qur’ān recount that when the verse

"Indeed those who have faith and do righteous deeds- it is they who are the best of creatures".[1]

Was sent down, the Noble Prophet (s) turned, looked at ‘Alī (‘a) and said, ‘The purport of this verse are you and your Shiites; you will [together] be happy and favored on the day of resurrection.’

In another Hadīth, the Noble Prophet (s) stated, ‘The purport of this verse are you and your Shiites. You and I will meet at Kawthar[2]. When communities come there for accounting, they will be calling you while a bright light shines from your face.’

Hadīths which state that this verse was sent down for the sake of ‘Alī’s Shiites and that the Noble Prophet (s) called ‘Alī’s followers Shī‘ah have been recorded in many books. For more examples, refer to the sources at the bottom of this page.[3]

Therefore, ‘Alī’s followers were named Shī‘ah by the Noble Prophet (s) and this by itself is considered a basis for determining the way of [selecting] the leader and

1. *Sūrat al-Bayyinah (The Proof):* 7.
2. The Fountain in Paradise.
3. Al-Dur al-Manthūr, 6/589; al-Sawā‘iq al-Muhriqah/161; Nihāyah Ibn Athīr, Maddat Qamh, 4/106; Manāqib Ibn Maghāzili, /293 and other than these. Of course Suyūti has transmitted this Hadīth in his al-Dur al-Manthūr from Tafsīr Tabari and Tārikh Ibn ‘Asākir.

guardian [of the Islāmic community] after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s).

2- The Imamate is a Counterpart of Prophethood

There is no doubt that the position of Imamate is different from the position of prophethood. The Noble Prophet (s) is the receiver of Divine Revelation and the founder of religion (*dīn*) whereas an Imām (‘a) is neither a receiver of Divine Revelation nor a founder of religion, but the responsibilities which the Noble Prophet (s) bore in the domain of explicating and executing Divine Laws are shouldered by the Imām (‘a) who succeeds him. An Imām (‘a) is the high religious authority responsible for explaining divine injunctions and Islāmic beliefs. He is also the administrator of community affairs. Taking this principle into consideration and according to transmitted traditions, the day that the Noble Prophet (s) announced his divine mission to Bani Hāshim, he also publicly declared that ‘Alī’ (‘a) would be his successor as the leader of the Islāmic community. This signifies that prophethood and the Imamate are counterparts and the one who holds any one of these positions is appointed and delegated by Allah by means of revelation. It has thus been written in sources of history:

For three years, the Noble Prophet (s) kept his prophethood and divine call hidden. Then Allah addressed him,

"Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk".[1]

1. *Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’ (Poets):* 214.

Allah's Messenger (s) invited more than forty of his relatives, all of whom belonged to Bani Hāshim, to a luncheon. When they had finished eating, he addressed them, 'No human being has ever brought to his people something better than what I have for you. I have brought you the good of both this and the next world. My God has commanded me to call on you to submit to monotheism (*tawhīd*) and to believe in my prophethood. Who among you will help on this course? The one who assists me on this path will be my brother, legatee and successor.'

When the Noble Prophet (s) said this, he paused to see who would affirmatively respond to his call. A deafeningly dead silence, mixed with bewilderment and perplexity, reigned over the meeting. Everyone cast their heads down and sunk into deep thought.

At once 'Alī ('a), whose age had not yet exceeded fifteen, broke the silence by standing up, turning towards the Noble Prophet (s) and saying, 'O Prophet of Allah! I will help you on this course.' Then he extended his hand to hold the Noble Prophet's (s) hand as a pledge of devotion and loyalty. Allah's Messenger (s) ordered 'Alī ('a) to sit down and once more repeated his call. 'Alī ('a) stood up again and declared his readiness [to assist Allah's Prophet (s)]. The Noble Prophet (s) again told him to sit down. The Noble Prophet (s) made a third call and like the previous two times, no one responded in the affirmative save 'Alī ('a). This time, the Prophet of Allah (s) placed his hand over 'Alī's (a) hand and, in the presence of the elders of Bani Hāshim, made his historical declaration,

'My relatives, lo and behold! 'Alī is my brother, legatee and successor.'[1]

This Hadīth categorically proves that the emergence of Shiism is synchronous with the appearance of Islām and that prophethood is a counterpart of the Imamate. Of course this is not the only place where the Noble Prophet (s) appointed his successor, and leader of the Muslims. We will briefly cite other instances where he explicitly stated this issue.

3- Hadīth Manzilah

Hadīth Manzilah is one of the most famous traditions which scholars of Hadīth and historians have recounted.

This is a brief account of Hadīth Manzilah:

When the Noble Prophet (s) [together with the Muslim army] set out to engage the Romans at Tabūk, he told 'Alī ('a) to remain in Medīnah so as to thwart the seditions and conspiracies of hypocrites. At this, enemies began spreading baseless rumors that the relationship between the Noble Prophet (s) and 'Alī ('a) had turned sour and that was why they had not come together. Upon hearing this, 'Alī ('a) hurriedly departed to join the Muslim military camp and recounted these hearsays to Allah's Messenger (s). In response, the Prophet of Allah stated, 'They have lied. I left you as my deputy to protect my home and household. Therefore, return to take your responsibilities as my representative in your and my

1. Tārikh Tabari, 2/319-321, printed by Dār al-Ma'ārif, Egypt.

households. Are you not pleased to be for me what Aaron was for Moses, except that there is no prophet after me?'[1]

This Hadīth expressly indicates that 'Alī ('a) has all the qualifications and jurisdictions which Aaron had, except prophethood. One of the positions Aaron held was being a minister for Moses, as the Holy Qur'ān states:

'*He said, "My Lord! Open my breast for me. Make my affair easy for me. Remove the hitch from my tongue,*[2] *[So that] they may understand my discourse. Appoint for me a minister from among my family, Aaron my brother. Strengthen my back through him,*[3] *And make him my associate in my affair, So that we may glorify you greatly, And remember You greatly. Indeed You see us best.*'[4]

The exception of prophethood in the Noble Prophet's (s) words bespeaks that 'Alī ('a) held all the responsibilities which Aaron ('a) held, and this does not exclusively apply to the Battle of Tabūk, but it was a general criterion, one of whose instances was the aforementioned battle. If the intention [of the Noble Prophet's (s) words] was deputyship particularly with regard to the aforesaid journey, there was no need for this general yardstick and excepting [the position of] prophethood.

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1. Sahīh Bukhāri, 6/3 print no. 1314; Sahīh Muslim, 7/120/ bāb fazā'il 'Alī ('a); Sunan Ibn Mājah (bābe fazā'ile ashābe piyāmbar), 1/55; Sīrah Ibn Hishām, 2/519-520.
2. That is, 'Grant me clarity of speech.'
3. That is, 'reinforce my strength through him.'
4. *Sūrat Tāhā:* 29-30.

4- Hadīth Ghadīr

Hadīth Ghadīr is one of the many proofs which demonstrate the leadership of ‘Alī (‘a) after the Noble Prophet’s (s) sad demise.

The Prophet of Allah (s) did appoint a successor and leader of the Islāmic community towards the end of his prophetic mission:

In 10 AH, the Prophet of Islām (s) set out with a caravan of ten thousand people to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca so that he may teach Muslims the religious rites of the Hajj. He delivered detailed and invaluable speeches on the days of ‘Arafah and Minā.

The pilgrimage and religious rites of the Hajj came to an end and everyone left Mecca to return to their homelands. When caravans drew near a blue lake by the name of Ghadīr, the angel of revelation descended on the Noble Prophet (s) with orders that he should stop right there. Allah thus addressed the Prophet (s):

"O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, And if you do not, You will not have communicated his message, And Allah shall protect you from the people.Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot".[1]

Despite the sensitivity of the time, the adhān[2] resounded throughout the desert, after which the Noble Prophet (s) made the following speech: ‘Praise belongs to Allah, in whom I believe. I seek His help and put all my trust in

1. *Sūrat al-Mā’idah (The Table):* 67.
2. Muslim call to prayer.

Him. I seek the protection of Allah from evil and ill-deeds; Allah, the one and only guide for the misled. Whoever He guides will never again be misguided. I bear witness that there is no god save Him and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

O people, lo and behold! My death has drawn nigh and I will soon depart this temporal life. Both you and I bear responsibilities…Lo and behold! For whomsoever I am leader and guardian, 'Alī is also his leader and guardian.'

The Noble Prophet (s) repeated the last sentence three times, and stated, 'O Lord! Love whoever loves 'Alī and hate whoever hates him; help whoever helps 'Alī and forsake whoever leaves him alone.

It is incumbent on those present to give [this] news to the ones who are absent so that they may become aware of this matter.'

This splendid sentence had not yet come to an end when the angel of revelation descended with the following verse:

"Today the faithless have despaired of your religion.So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islām as your religion".[1]

Hadīth Ghadīr is one of the recurrently transmitted prophetic traditions. Suffice it to say that one hundred and twenty (120) of the Noble Prophet's companions have transmitted it [directly] from him and seventy nine (79) successors to the Noble Prophet's (s) companions have

1. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 3.

also recounted it, and in the course of [the last] fourteen centuries, three hundred and twenty (320) Sunni scholars and intellectuals have narrated it. Needless to say that if we add to these figures the number of Shī'ah scholars who have relayed this prophetic tradition, we will conceive it as one of the most recurrently transmitted Hadīths.[1]

The Emergence of Shiism under the Auspices of these Directives

These three categorical and indisputable Hadīths suffice to prove our assertion. These directives gave rise to a group of people who surrounded 'Alī ('a) and became well known as his followers.

In the book entitled, *Khitat al-Shām*, the renowned researcher, Muhammad Kurd 'Alī, has written, 'During the very era of the Noble Prophet (s), a number of eminent companions of Allah's Messenger (s) were renowned as

1. Sahīh Tirmithī, 5/297; Sunan Ibn Mājah, 1/45/ Hadīth no. 121; al-Mustradrak alā Sahīhain of al-Hākim Nishābūrī, 3/110; Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, 1/88 and 2/672; Khasāis Nisā'ī, /94, 95 and 50; al-Musannaf ibn Abī Shībah, 12/78/ Hadīth no. 12167; Mishkāt al-Masābih, 3/246; al-Riyāth al-Nadirah of Muhibb al-Dīn Tabarī, 2/169. These sources suffice to illustrate our point that this prophetic tradition is one of the most recurrently transmitted Hadīths. Those interested in more research about this prophetic tradition and those who have transmitted it can refer to books that have been written with respect to Hadīth Ghadīr, books such as 'Abaqāt al-Anwār, written by Mir Hāmid Husayn Hindī (d. 1306 AH) and al-Ghadīr, authored by the renowned researcher 'Abd al-Husayn Amīnī (1320-1390 AH).

lovers, adherents and followers of ‘Alī (‘a); such people as, Salmān Fārsī, who used to say: “We paid allegiance to the Noble Prophet (s) and pledged to uphold two principles: to be benevolent to Muslims, emulating ‘Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a), and to submit to his guardianship (*wilāyat*).” Abū Sa’īd Khudarī said, “People were called upon to maintain five things. They upheld four of them and abandoned the fifth.” They asked him, “What are those four things they maintained?” He responded, “They upheld the prayers, alms tax (*zakāt*), fasting in the month of Ramadhān and making pilgrimage to the House of Allah[1].” They again asked him, “What is the fifth thing which they abandoned?” He answered, “The divine guardianship (wilāyat) of ‘Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a).” They asked him once more, “Is the guardianship of ‘Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a) as obligatory and necessary as the former four [duties]?” He said, “Yes, it is as requisite and binding as the other four duties.” Other companions of the Noble Prophet (s) who were well known as adherents of ‘Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a) were Abū Dhar Ghafārī, ‘Amār Yāsir, Hathīfah bin Yamān, Dhul Shahadatain Khazīmah bin Thābit, Abū Ayūb Ansārī, Khālid bin Saīd and Qays bin Sa‘d bin ‘Ibādah.’[2]

Shī‘ah during the Era of the Prophetic Mission

The Noble Prophet’s (s) emphatic instructions, whose examples and books, in which they have been recorded, we have adduced, gave rise to the appearance and gradual expansion of Shiism in Islāmic lands. A number of people

1. The Ka‘bah in Mecca.
2. Khitat Shām of Muhammad Kurd ‘Alī, 5/251.

heartily accepted the guardianship (*wilāyah*) of ʻAlī bin Abī Tālib (ʻa) in the very era of the prophetic mission and became well known as his Shīʻahs. These people maintained their pledge to assist ʻAlī bin Abī Tālib (ʻa) after the age of the prophetic mission with utmost sincerity and loyalty. These people formed the main core of Shiism in the early days of Islām. Thereafter, Shiism made its way forward and expanded with the passage of time by paying heed to authentic knowledge with regard to the issue of the Imāmate and the immediate succession of ʻAlī bin Abī Tālib (ʻa).

Shiism began in the land of Hijāz[1]. When Imām ʻAlī (ʻa) moved the seat of government to Iraq, Shiism grew further and henceforth spread to other parts of the world.

1. In present day Saudi Arabia.

2- Shī‘as are a Minority and the Sunnis are the Majority

Question: If Shī‘as are on the right course, then why are they the minority and how come Sunnis are in majority?

Response: Being in the majority has never been a sign of rightfulness and being in the minority has never indicated being erroneous or misled. In the entire history of the prophets' divine missions and religious propagation, from the time of Prophet Noah (‘a) to the era of the Seal of the Prophets (s), the faithful have always been in the minority and the faithless have always been in the majority. Whenever the Holy Qur'ān recounts the perennial struggles of prophets (‘a), it always reminds us that converts and the faithful have perpetually been very few. With respect to Noah (‘a), it says:

"Certainly We sent Noah to his people, and he remained with them For a thousand-less-fifty years. Then the flood overtook them while they were wrongdoers".[1] *‘When Our edict came. and the oven gushed [a stream of water], We said, "Carry in it a pair*[2] *of every kind [of animal], along with your family -except those [them] against whom the edict has already been given- and those who have faith.' "And none believed with him except a few".*[3]

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1. *Sūrat al-‘Ankabūt (The Spider):* 14.
2. That is, male and female. Cf. 23:27.
3. *Sūrat Hūd:* 40.

In another verse, the Holy Qur’ān states:

‘*They built for him as many temples as he wished, and figures, basins like cisterns, and cauldrons fixed [in the ground]. “O House of David, observe thanksgiving, "And few of My servants are grateful".*[1]

The Holy Qur’ān also warns the Noble Prophet (s) against following the majority:

"If you obey most of those on the earth, they will lead you astray from the way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjectures And they do nothing but surmise".[2]

The Holy Qur’ān also addresses the Noble Prophet (s) thus:

"Yet most people will not have faith, however eager you should be".[3]

The most multitudinous populations in the world are found in such countries as China and India, whose majority are materialists and idolators. If we compare the population of Muslims with the population of the whole world, we will find that Muslims are not in majority.

Let us recount one of Amīr al-Mu’minīn[4] ‘Alī’s (‘a) wise sayings with regard to distinguishing the truth from falsehood. During the Battle of Jamal, a man asked Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a), ‘Dare you fight Talha and Zubayr, two of the most eminent companions of the Noble Prophet (s)?’ Imām ‘Alī (‘a) responded, ‘You are wrong. The

1. *Sūrat Saba’ (Sheba)*: 13.
2. *Sūrat al-An‘ām (Cattle):* 116.
3. *Sūrat Yūsuf (Joseph):* 103.
4. The Leader of the Faithful.

eminence and prominence of individuals is not a sign of either being right or wrong. You must [be able to] conceive what is right in order to know people who are in the right and it is only by perceiving falsehood that you will know who is wrong.'[1]

Besides this, despite being in the minority with regard to the whole Muslim population, the Shī'ah constitute a large population in the world and have an effective presence in most parts of the world. Apart from countries like Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Lebanon, whose majority are Shiites, all Islāmic countries have a considerable number of Shī'ah minorities who run Mosques, Institutes, Schools and other cultural programs.

Basically, we have to consider that the Shī'ah used to be known as an opposition and adversary of the ruling regimes and the political systems had labeled them *rāfizah*[2] not only to suppress them, but to exterminate them altogether. For instance, after gaining control of East Khurāsān in Eastern Iran, Sultān Mahmūd Ghaznawī embarked upon uprooting Shī'as and Mu'tazilites. He burnt their academic works and libraries so that no traces or vestiges of Shiism and Mu'tazilism should remain. He always used to strengthen the adherents of Hadīth and the Kirāmites[3] against the Shī'ah and Mu'tazilites, whom he used to consider as his main enemies.

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1. The Attraction and Repulsion of 'Alī ('a) as quoted from Doctor Taha Husayn's book 'Alī ('a) wa Nubūwwat.

2. Literary means dissenter, heretic and renegade.

3. One of the inhabitants of Khurāsān by the name of Abdullah bin Kirām gathered a lot of followers by feigning asceticism and through sanctimony and cunning. One of his disciples was

After betraying the Fātimides, Salāh al-Dīn Ayūbī decided to annihilate the Shī‘ah. He did not manage to eliminate them altogether, but still killed a great many of them.[1]

During the reign of the Ottomans, in the era of Sultan Salīm, between forty thousand and seventy thousand Shiites were beheaded in present day Turkey as a result of a fatwa issued by a Hanafi jurist called Nūh.[2]

During the reign of Jazzār, there was a bloodbath in which many Shiites were killed in an area called Jabal ‘Āmil in Lebanon. Their books were gathered and burnt or used as fuel in bakeries.[3]

Considering these mass murders, the survival of Shī‘as, and what is more with a strong and comprehensive culture and having prominent religious scholars and intellectuals in all Islāmic as well as scientific fields is a divine miracle. It is under the auspices of this grace that the manifestation of true Islām has kept going without any distortion up to the fifteenth century AH and fortunately, day by day it shows the right path to more human beings and exposes the ignorance and bigotry that has dominated history.

Sultān Mahmūd, who was a great disaster for Shī‘as and theologians. Hawāshī, 7/60.

1. A‘yān al-Shī‘ah, 3/30; Tārīkh al-Shī‘ah of Muthaffar, /192.
2. Al-Bilād al-‘Arabiyah wa al-Daulat al-‘Uthmāniyah, Hisri, /40; A‘yān al-Shī‘ah, 1/30-31; Al-Fusūl al-Muhimmah, /140.
3. Dāi’rat al-Ma ‘ārif al-Lubnaniyah, Fu’ad al-Bastāni, under the biography of Ibrāhim Yahya.

Chapter Two:
Shīʻah Beliefs

1- Positions of Allah's Saints and Supernatural Powers

Question: Do prophets (‘a) and Allah's saints (‘a), in addition to having ordinary powers, also have the ability to perform supernatural deeds?

Response: The cosmos is created on the law of cause and effect. Every human being benefits from divine powers in their work, and they become powerless and incapable of performing any deed once their relationship with that eternal power is disconnected. Therefore, the supernatural deeds of Allah's saints (‘a) all derive from His power and will. Once this connection has been cut, no man has the ability to perform any deed, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

Extraordinary deeds are effects of the spiritual and psychological perfection of Allah's saint (‘a) which he attains through devoted servitude, traversing the straight path[1] and acting on Islāmic teachings.[2]

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1. Sirāt al-Mustaqīm.

2. Yes, ascetic discipline and mortification is another way of attaining powers to perform supernatural and extraordinary deeds, but this traversing this path is harām and prohibited.
And sometimes supernatural interests call for an individual to attain perfection during childhood which other human beings are incapable of, but this has an exceptional aspect.

Under the auspices of servitude, devotion to Allah, and sincerity in worship, man chooses for himself a spiritual journey to attain inner perfection. This spiritual journey is not related to his personal and social life, and it is outside the confines of the material body. On this spiritual journey, every person attains stations according to his natural basic qualities and ability. Sometimes he witnesses these stations in this world, or after death.

What does Perfection mean?

When we say that Allah is Absolute and Infinite Perfection, we mean Allah's attributes of divine beauty, such as knowledge, power, life and will. Whenever a human being, under the auspices of traversing the path of obedience, sets foot on the the ladder of perfection, he aims at achieving more esoteric existential perfection, knowledge, power, will and everlasting life. In this case, he can go higher than an angel and attain more perfection.

Man has always desired to master and control the world, and to perform deeds which ordinary people are incapable of. For example, some yogis and ascetics strengthen their hearts and souls by undertaking prohibited ascetic practices and mortifications and thus attain some powers.

But the correct path to attain the prosperity of both worlds and spiritual stations is submission to Allah and traversing the path of servitude until finally, the power to influence creation is achieved.

In one divinely inspired Hadīth, the Noble Prophet (s) has mentioned the high spiritual stations of mystic wayfarers

traversing the path of truth and devotedly obeying Allah. He has thus transmitted Allah's word:

'No human being has ever got closer to me and is more loved by me save by performing obligatory duties.' Then he added, 'By performing optional prayers, my servant becomes so close and beloved to me. Once he becomes my beloved, I become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks and his hands with which he attacks. I answer him whenever he calls me and grant him whatever he requests.'[1]

If we delve deeper into this Hadīth, we will conceive the great perfection which man attains under the auspices of performing obligatory and optional duties. In this state, man's inner powers reach such an extent that by divine power, he hears sounds which he would not hear with ordinary powers and sees shapes and figures which he cannot see with ordinary powers. Finally, his wishes become fulfilled and his needs are alleviated. He becomes Allah's friend and his deeds become Allah's deeds.

There is no room for doubt that this Hadīth means that the eyes and ears of one who is beloved by Allah become sharper and more penetrative.

The Effects of Devotion to Allah and Perfection of the Soul

One of the esoteric effects of a perfect soul is having the power to influence the natural world by the will and

1. Usūl Kāfi, 2/352, printed by Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyah.

permission of Allah. Under the auspices of worship and devotion to Allah, it is not only the body which comes under control and the influence of man's will, but the natural world also becomes submissive to man. By the will and permission of Allah, and with the help of the power he has attained as a result of gaining proximity to Allah, man influences nature and can perform some miracles and supernatural deeds and in reality, he attains the power to influence and master creation.

The Holy Qur'ān and Miracles of the Saints

The Holy Qur'ān recounts that Allah's prophets (‘a) could perform miracles because of their ideal souls and with the permission of Allah. We will hereunder briefly adduce some of these ccounts:

1- Joseph's Miraculous Cure of His Father's Blindness

Jacob (‘a) had cried for many years because of being separated from his son Joseph (‘a). He lost his sight towards the end of his life as a result of this protracted grief and crying. After some years, Joseph (‘a) sent someone to Canaan with a shirt and ordered him to cast that shirt on Jacob's face so that he may regain his eye-sight. The bearer of glad tidings came and discharged Joseph's orders. At that very moment, Jacob (‘a) regained his sight.

"When the bearer of good news arrived, he cast it[1] *on his face, and he regained his sight".*[2]

1. That is, the Shirt of Joseph (‘a).
2. *Sūrat Yūsuf*: 96.

There is no doubt that the one who performs it is Allah, but He granted the bearer of good news the ability to perform this miracle because it was Joseph's (ʻa) desire. That he performed such a great deed by means of a simply casting the shirt on Jacob's face is a sign that miracles and supernatural deeds of the prophets (ʻa) can be fulfilled through simple means. The reason is for people not to imagine that prophets (ʻa) perform their deeds through scientific and technological means.

2- The Powers of Solomon's Companions

We all know that Solomon (ʻa) summoned the Queen of Sheba, but before she came, Solomon addressed those present in the meeting:

"O [members of the] elite! Which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?"[1]

One of the jinn said:

"I will bring it to you before you rise from your place. Indeed I have the power for it and I am trustworthy".[2]

Another man, whose name interpreters of the Holy Qur'ān have said was Āsif bin Barkhiyā, Solomon's nephew, vizier and successor, said that he could bring her throne within the twinkling of an eye:

"The one who had knowledge of the Book said, "I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye."So when he saw it set near him, he said, "This is by the grace of my Lord, to test me if I will give thanks or be ungrateful. And

1. *Sūrat Naml (The Ant):* 38.
2. *Ibid: 39.*

whoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own sake. And whoever is ungrateful [should know that] my Lord is indeed all-sufficient, all-generous".[1]

We have to delve deeper into the meaning of these verses in order to discern who the real agent of these supernatural deeds is. Is it Allah who directly does these preternatural works while Āsif bin Barkhiyā and the others are mere play-actors who do not have the least effect in those deeds? Or are the agents of these actions, individuals? The truth is that these people attain these powers from their nearness to Allah and they do these supernatural deeds by means of their penetrative will. The outward aspects of the above quoted verses agree with the second opinion, because:

Firstly, Solomon (‘a) asked them to perform a supernatural deed and he conceived that they were capable of doing it.

Secondly, the one who said that he could bring the throne of Queen Sheba before Solomon (‘a) rose from his place described himself in this way, ‘*Indeed I have the power for it and I am trustworthy.*’

There is no reason for this individual to say that he has the power to do this deed if he were not the true agent or doer.

Thirdly, the second one said he could bring Queen Sheba’s throne within the twinkling of an eye and ascribed this preternatural deed to himself, ‘*I will bring it.*’

1. *Ibid: 40.*

Fourthly, Allah asserts that the reason why the second man was able to do this amazing deed was his knowledge of the Book, knowledge which is outside the reach of ordinary human beings and exclusively belongs to Allah's devoted servants, and which is a product of these people's nearness to Allah.

3- Other Powers of Solomon ('a)

With regard to Prophet Solomon ('a), the Holy Qur'ān categorically states:

"And for Solomon [We disposed] the tempestuous wind which blew by his command toward the land which We have blessed, and We have knowledge of all things".[1]

The point worth considering is that this verse expressly states that it was Solomon ('a) who commanded the wind to blow in the direction he wanted.

In another verse, the Holy Qur'ān states: And for Solomon [We subjected] the wind: its morning course was a month's journey and its evening course was a months journey.[2]

It is true that Allah subjected the wind for Solomon ('a), but the previous verse '*which blew by his command*' clearly states that Solomon's command and will was effective in causing this natural phenomenon. For instance, determining the time and direction of movement as well as stopping it from moving, were all connected to the will of Solomon ('a).

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1. *Sūrat al-Anbiyā' (The Prophets): 81.*
2. *Sūrat Saba (Sheba): 12.*

Another point can be deduced from the verses related to Solomon (‘a), and that is that Allah had subjected a lot of insubordinate natural phenomena for him and he used to easily employ them in any way he wanted. For example:

"We made a fount of [molten] copper flow for him".[1]

Existents such as the jinn, which can not be seen with ordinary eyes, were subjugated by him and used to do whatever he wanted:

"And [We placed at his service] some of the jinn who would work for him by the permission of his Lord, and if any of them swerved from Our command, We would make him taste the punishment of the Blaze".[2]

The outward aspect of these verses denotes that way in which these natural phenomena were controlled was the same. It is true that Allah the Great had made these natural laws subservient to Solomon (‘a), but nonetheless his will was not ineffective, because without his will, the fount of molten copper would not flow for him and the jinn would not work for him.

All these [powers] are kinds of esoteric guardianship, which means that as a result of the proximity that a prophet (‘a) has to Allah, he attains a station where nature and even invisible beings such as the jinn become subordinate to him and do not exist outside the realm of his influence.

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid: 12-13.*

4- The Powers of Jesus Christ ('a)

The Holy Qur'ān attributes some supernatural deeds to Jesus Christ ('a) and explains that all these deeds were a result of his inner powers and generative will. '*And [he will be] an apostle to the Children of Israel, [and he will declare,] "I have certainly brought you a sign from your Lord: I will create for you out of clay the form of a bird, then I will breathe into it, and it will become a bird by Allah's leave. And I heal the blind and the leper and I revive the dead by Allah's leave. And I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. There is indeed a sign in that for you, Should you be faithful.*'[1]

In these verses, Jesus Christ ('a) attributes the following issues to himself:

1- Creating a bird from clay.

2- Breathing life into the bird.

3- Healing the blind.

4- Curing the leper.

5- Raising the dead to life.

Jesus Christ ('a) conceives himself as the agent (or doer) of these works, not that he asks and Allah performs them. He says that he will perform these deeds by Allah's leave. What does Allah's permission mean in this case? Is it a kind of verbal permission? It certainly does not mean this, but denotes inner or esoteric permission in the sense that Allah grants His slave such perfection and power that he becomes capable of performing these deeds.

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1. *Sūrat Āl-I'Imrān (Family of Imrān): 49.*

This assertion is confirmed by the fact that it is not only in extraordinary matters where man needs Allah's leave, but in all his life affairs and there is no deed which occurs without His permission. Allah's permission in all cases is granting man the power and grace to perform his deeds. In the verse under discussion, Jesus Christ ('a) ascribes these deeds to himself and in another verse Allah explicitly attributes the aforementioned issues to Himself:

'*When Allah will say, O Jesus son of Mary, remember My blessing upon you and upon your mother, when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, so you would speak to the people in the cradle and in adulthood, and when I taught you the Book and wisdom, the Torah and the Evangel, and when you would create from clay the form of a bird, with My leave, and you would breathe into it and it would become a bird, with My leave; and you would heal the blind and the leper, with My leave; and you would raise the dead, with My leave; and when I held off [the evil of] the Children of Israel from you when you brought them manifest proofs, whereat the faithless among them said, "This is nothing but plain magic."*'[1]

We have to delve deeper into the sentences of this verse in order to find out who the agent and doer of these deeds is. Allah has not at all said that He created the bird, healed the sick and raised the dead to life. Instead He says that Jesus Christ created the bird, healed the sick and raised the dead to life. Is there a more explicit expression than this?

1. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 110.

But the Holy Qur'ān states that Jesus Christ's (‘a) deeds were contingent on Allah's permission, to make it clear that man is not independent in his deeds. This also clarifies the issue of unity of divine actions (*tawhīd af‘Ali*), as well as refutes the Mu‘tazilite and polytheistic assumption that man is only in need of Allah for his creation, but completely independent and needless of Allah in his deeds and works.

Esoteric Guardianship and the Issue of Exaggeration

One of the false opinions in regard to esoteric guardianship (*wilāyat takwīni*) is the imagination that such a belief gives rise to exaggerating (*ghulūw*) the station of the infallible leaders (‘a), when it is not.

A *ghāli* is a person who raises Allah's servants to a position higher than the station of servitude and ascribes Allah's qualities (*sifāt*) and deeds (*af‘āl*) to them. For instance, a *ghāli* claims that it is the infallible leaders (‘a) who manage the cosmic order. He conceives that they are creators, givers of sustenance, life and death in an absolute sense.

Ghulūw entails conceiving the infallible leaders as God and/ or as the fountainhead of divine actions[1], whereas none of these two criteria apply to esoteric guardianship because believers in esoteric guardianship conceive the infallible leaders neither as God nor as sources of divine deeds and works. Instead, believers in esoteric

1. ‘Divine actions’ means that the agent (or doer) must be independent in his deeds and not connected with any station, whether that deed is done naturally or supernaturally.

guardianship assert that under the auspices of proximity to Allah and with His permission, infallible leaders (‘a) have the power to influence cosmic affairs for the purpose of guiding and reforming mankind. These two kinds of thought are so different that it is very hard to find any affinity between them because nothing is reduced from Allah if He enables one of his servants to perform a [supernatural] deed for the sake of guiding people, nor does the servant who has been empowered with esoteric guardianship rise higher than the station of servitude.

Sometimes Allah grants an angel and/ or angels the power to shower stones on the people of Lot (‘a) and exterminate everyone, but believing that angels have such powers does not necessitate belief in polytheism and equality of angels with Allah.

Therefore, Allah does not take partners by granting such powers to one or some of His servants.

2- Imploring the Assistance of Allah's Saints ('a)

Question: Is imploring the assistance of Allah's saints[1]('a) correct and divinely legal, and is it founded on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah[2] of the Noble Prophet (s)?

Response: Imploring the assistance of Allah's saints ('a) is a kind of resorting to a means (or medium). The Holy Qur'ān has urged man to implore the saints of Allah and has consistently ordered pious and faithful God-fearing communities to seek media.

'*O you who believe!*

Be wary of Allah,

and seek the means of recourse to Him,

and wage jihād in His way,

so that you may be felicitous.'[3]

Now we have to find out what *'seeking means'* denotes. Reflection on the above quoted verse drives this point home that seeking means denotes pursuing causes of proximity and nearness to Allah. There are various means and ways of attaining proximity to Allah, some of which we will adduce hereunder:

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1. Tawassul [=imploring, entreating, and invoking help].
2. Model practices, customs and traditions of the Prophet (s).
3. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 35.

1- Discharging Obligatory Duties

Discharging obligatory duties is one of the means of gaining proximity to Allah. The leader of the faithful ʻAlī (ʻa) said:

ʻ*The best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah, the Glorified, the Exalted, seek nearness, is by believing in Him and His Prophet (s); fighting in his cause (jihād), for it is the pinnacle of Islām; believing in the kalimat al-Ikhlās (the expression of Divine purification), for it is just; and the establishment of prayer, for it is the basis of community; payment of zakāt (Islāmic alms tax), for it is a compulsory obligation; fasting in the month of Ramadhān, for it is a shield against chastisement; performing hajj of the House of Allah (i.e the Kaʻbah) and its Umra (other than usual visits), for these two acts banish poverty and wash away sins; regard for kinship, for it increases wealth and length of life; giving alms secretly, for it covers shortcomings; giving alms openly, for it protects against bad death; and extending benefits (to people), for it saves from positions of disgrace*.ʼ[1]

2- Invoking Allah's Names and Attributes

Another way of imploring the assistance of Allah is to invoke His divine names and attributes. This kind of imploration prevails excessively in the Hadīths and supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt[2] (ʻa).

Two Hadīths will suffice to illustrate our point:

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1. Nahj al- Balāgha (The Peak of Human Eloquence), sermon no. 109, translation of Seyyīd ʻAlī Reza.
2. The Noble Prophet's household.

1- In his Sunan, Tirmithi transmits from Buraydah that the Noble Prophet (s) heard a man saying, 'O Lord! I bear witness that there is no god except You. You are the All-embracing, who neither begets nor was begotten, nor has any equal.' [On hearing this], the Noble Prophet (s) said to him, 'You have invoked Allah by means of His great names, through which He answers whoever supplicates Him and through which He grants whatever is requested of Him.'[1]

2- In a supplication by the Imāms Bāqir ('a) and Sādiq ('a), known as *Du'ā Samāt*, we read:

'O Lord! I invoke You by Your great and greatest names, higher and highest names, through which you open the closed doors of paradise and the earth, and ease the hardships [of life].'[2]

Du'ā Jūshan Kabīr, which is recited on the Blessed Nights[3] of the month of Ramadhān is a fine example of this kind of invocation.

3- Imploring Assistance through the Holy Qur'ān

One of the ways of imploring assistance is to recite the Holy Qur'ān and by this means ask Allah to alleviate ones needs. In reality, this kind of invocation is entreating Allah's deed because the Holy Qur'ān is Allah's word which was revealed or sent down to the heart of the Noble Prophet (s).

1. Sunan Tirmidhi, 5/515/ Hadīth no. 4375.
2. Misbāh al-Mutahjjid of Shaykh Tūsi, 374.
3. Or 'Night of Decree, Night of Destiny, Night of Power.'

Ahmad bin Hanbal transmits from ‘Umrān bin Husīn that he heard the Noble Prophet (s) saying, ‘Recite the Holy Qur’ān and by this means ask Allah to alleviate your needs before a group of people come and ask other human beings to solve their problems through it.’[1]

The above quoted verse clarifies that, imploring anything that has a special position and honor in the sight of Allah is permissible, because it is recommended on the Blessed Nights of the month of Ramadhān to recite this *du‘ā*:

‘O Lord! I entreat you by means of this Book which you have sent down and through what it contains. O Lord! Your great and beautiful names are in this Book…’[2]

4- Imploring Allah’s Help through the Supplication of a Pious Brother

One of the ways to implore Allah’s help and seek His mercy is asking a pious brother to supplicate for you. This kind of imploring Allah’s help is accepted by all monotheists of the world and in this regard, it suffices to know that bearers of Allah’s throne ask for forgiveness for the pious:

‘*Those who bear the Throne, and those around it, celebrate the praise of their Lord and have faith in Him, and they plead for forgiveness for the faithful: “Our Lord! You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow Your way and save them from the punishment of hell. Our Lord! Admit them into the Gardens of Eden, which you have promised them,*

1. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hadīth no. 4454.
2. Ibn Tawūs, Iqbāl 41.

along with whoever is righteous among their forebears, their spouses and their descendants. Indeed You are the All-mighty, the All-wise. Save them from the ills; and whomever You save from the ill that day[1] *You will have had mercy upon him, and that is the greatest success.*'[2]

It is not only angels who plead for mercy for mankind, but the pious also supplicate for their ancestors:

'*And [also for] those who came in after them, Who say, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who were our forerunners in the faith, and do not put any rancor in our hearts toward the faithful. Our Lord, You are indeed most kind and merciful*."'[3]

The Noble Prophet (s) asked the Islāmic community to supplicate for him, 'Supplicate for me and ask Allah to grant me that position in paradise which is reserved only for one man, and I hope that I am that one man. Any one who asks Allah to grant me this position will earn my intercession on the day of resurrection.'[4]

5- Imploring Help by means of the Noble Prophet's Invocation during His Lifetime

The Noble Prophet (s) is the noblest and most honorable human being created by Allah. Many verses of the Holy Qur'ān mention the high position and status of Allah's Messenger (s). With respect to the high rank of the Noble Prophet (s), it suffices to know that Allah has considered

1. That is, the day of judgment.
2. *Sūrat Ghāfir (The Forgiver):* 7-9.
3. *Sūrat al-Hashr (The Banishment):* 10.
4. Mustadrak Bihār al-Anwār, 4/61.

him as the people's protector against His punishment; Allah has explicitly stated that He will not afflict the people for as long as the Noble Prophet (s) is among them:

'*But Allah will not punish them while you are in their midst, nor will Allah punish them while they plead for forgiveness*.'[1]

That Allah has mentioned the Noble Prophet's (s) name alongside His own and has juxtaposed obedience to Him with obedience to the Eminent Messenger ('a):

'*Whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle Has certainly achieved a great success.*'[2]

These and other verses of the Holy Qur'ān all indicate the Noble Prophet's (s) nobility and high rank; a rank that is unparalleled in all creation. It is because the Noble Prophet ('a) occupies this holy status that Allah will not reject his request, and it is for this very reason that sinners have been ordered to visit the Eminent Messenger (s) and ask him to plead with Allah for their forgiveness.

Higher than this, refraining from asking the Noble Prophet (s) to plead with Allah for one's forgiveness has been considered as a sign of hypocrisy:

'*When they are told, "Come that Allah's Apostle may plead for forgiveness for you," They twist their heads, And you see them turn away while they are disdainful. It is the same for them whether you plead for forgiveness for them, or do not plead for forgiveness for them: Allah will*

1. *Sūrat al-Anfāl (The Spoils):* 33.
2. *Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates):* 71.

never forgive them. Indeed Allah does not guide the transgressing lot.'[1] '*We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allah's leave. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful. But no, by your Lord! They will not believe until they make you a judge in their disputes, then do not find in their hearts any dissent to your verdict and submit in full submission*.'[2]

It can be inferred from some other verses that former communities used to ask their prophets ('a) to seek Allah's forgiveness for them. For instance, when the sins of Jacob's ('a) children became known, they asked their father:

'*Father! Plead [with Allah] for forgiveness of our sins! We have indeed been erring.' He said, "I shall plead with my Lord to forgive you; indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.*'[3]

This kind of imploration is not disputable. What is important is to know the reason why the supplication of prophets ('a) is acceptable, and that is their divine rank and status.

1. *Sūrat al-Munāfiqūn (The Hypocrites):* 5-6.
2. *Sūrat al-Nisā' (Women):* 74-75.
3. *Sūrat Yūsuf (Joseph):* 97-98.

6- Imploring the Assistance of the Noble Prophet (s) after His Death

Taking into consideration the four principles which have been discussed with respect to the possibility of connection, it has been proved that divine people are alive in the purgatory, and that there is connection between them and us. In this case, asking them to supplicate for us both during and after their lives is perfectly logical and the verse about forgiveness includes both states:

'*We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allah's leave. Had they, when they had wronged themselves, Come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, And the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, They would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful*.'[1]

Of course the reason why the supplication of the Noble Prophet (s) is accepted is because he has a pure heart and magnanimous soul, and because he is close to Allah. It is in recognition and honor of this spiritual status that Allah accepts his supplication, because a prayer which arises from a pure soul filled with divine love is accepted without any conditions and in this regard, there is no difference between one who is alive in this world or is living in purgatory.

That this verse is not restricted to the lifetime of the Noble Prophet (s) is demonstrated by the fact that Muslims from after the demise of the Noble Prophet(s) until today practically believe that the door of mercy is still open. Pilgrims visiting the Noble Prophet's (s) holy shrine, after offering him their *salām* and blessings, recite the above

1. *Sūrat al-Nisā (Women):* 64.

quoted verse and ask Allah to forgive them their sins. Every individual who visits the holy shrine of the Noble Prophet (s) will witness pilgrims doing this.

We will now adduce examples of the sayings of prominent Sunni scholars in regard to this verse and asking the Noble Prophet (s) to supplicate and implore Allah's help on their behalf:

1- Muhyū al-Dīn Nawawi, one of the prominent Sunni scholars of Hadīth and the commentator of Sahīh Muslim, has written, 'A pilgrim has to face the Noble Prophet (s) and seek the forgiveness of Allah through him, and one of the best things to do is what Māwardi, Qāzi Abū al-Tayb and our other mentors have transmitted from 'Utbah. 'Utbah said, "One day I was seated next to the holy shrine of the Noble Prophet (s) when a desert dweller arrived and said, 'Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah. I heard that Allah has stated, "*Had they, when they had wronged themselves,*

Come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness,

And the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them,

They would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful." O Prophet of Allah! I have come to you so that you may ask Allah to forgive me and alleviate my problems."'[1]

2- Bin Qudāmah Hanbali, author of the book entitled *Mughni*, while explaining the etiquettes of making pilgrimage to the holy shrine of the Noble Prophet (s),

1. Nūri, commentary on Sahīh Muslim, 8/256, printed by Maktabat al-Irshād.

says that visiting the holy shrine of Allah's Messenger (s) is recommended, and that in this regard the Noble Prophet (s) said, 'I answer the greetings (*salām*) of whoever greets me.' After this, he quotes 'Utbah's account of the desert Arab with the aim of saying that making pilgrimage to the holy shrine in this manner is recommended.

3- Ghazāli (d. 505 AH) has presented a detailed explanation of the manner of visiting the pilgrimage of the Noble Prophet (s) in a chapter related to the virtues of making pilgrimage to Medīna. He says, 'After completing the greetings (*salām*), stand while facing the Noble Prophet's (s) holy shrine and praise Allah while intermittently sending peace on the Noble Prophet (s). Then recite this verse, "*Had they, when they had wronged themselves, Come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, They would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful*." After that, say, 'I have heard your word, and obeyed your orders, and come to your Noble Prophet (s), entreating him to intercede with you on my behalf.'[1]

Besides Sunni scholars, many learned men, in their writings, have also concurred with making pilgrimage to the holy shrine of the Noble Prophet (s).

Questions concerning Imploration

Imploration (*tawassul*), among the deeds which Muslims perform in the Noble Prophet's (s) and other holy shrines, is one of the most criticized by Wahābis. In this regard,

1. Ahya' al-Ulūm, 1/259.

they have raised objections which we will examine hereunder:

1- Is entreating prayer (du'ā) from a dead person not tantamount to worshiping him?

The Wahābis believe that asking a living person to supplicate for one is permissible, because that person is able to perform this deed, and this is not tantamount to worshipping him. Supplicating for any thing from a dead person is counted as worshipping the dead because that person is not able to perform the deed asked of him, and this is naturally considered as polytheism.

Response: Firstly, asking an alive or dead person is not the criterion of worship, polytheism (*shirk*) and monotheism (*tawhīd*). How can entreating a living person to pray for one be tantamount to monotheism whereas asking the very same thing from a dead person be considered as polytheism? How can this be when the essence of the deed is the same, except that the person asked is either alive or dead, and no monotheist has ever stated that the yardstick of monotheism and polytheism is life and death? Yes, life and death can be effective in rendering this request beneficial or not beneficial, but they are not a standard in monotheism and polytheism.

Secondly, people who consider entreating dead people for supplication (*du'ā*) as polytheism, base this on their belief that the deaths of prophets ('a) and saints of Allah marks the end of their lives, and that there is no intermediary life in purgatory. It has been clearly stated in the Quran that martyrs are alive after their apparent, physical death, *but you perceive not*.

Thirdly, every kind of imploration and invocation becomes polytheistic once the implorer believes in the divinity and godhead of the man he is imploring and that Allah has entrusted certain powers to man. It is in this case that entreating this man, whether he is alive or dead, is considered as worship. However, requesting supplication from a person with the belief that he is a pious man, whose du'ā Allah accepts, does not amount to polytheism, and all Muslims extol the Noble Prophet (s) for this attribute.

2- Is entreating prayer (du'ā) from a dead person not worthless?

Some people believe that entreating a dead person who is not able to respond to the implorer is a futile and vain deed.

Response: This objection is based on a kind of materialistic worldview, which considers the deaths of Allah's saints ('a) as the end of their lives and that there is no intermediate life in purgatory. But it has previously been proved that there is a higher life in which they live, that they hear our invocations and that our connection with them has not been cut. Therefore, asking them to pray (*du'ā*) for us is a rational deed which is not vain and void. But whether their response is positive or negative is related to the in- tention of the implorer and the issue being requested of them.

3- Is there a barrier between us and people who have died?

Some people, while believing that there is a barrier separating us and those who have passed away, adduce the following verses:

'*When death comes to one of them, He says, "My Lord! Take me back, that I may act righteously in what I have left behind." "By no means! These are mere words that he says." And ahead of them is a barrier until the day they will be resurrected.*'[1]

Response:

Barzakh[2] is an Arabic word which literary means a barrier and fence, but this relates to a second return to the world of those who have departed this corporeal life, not connection with them.

1. *Sūrat al-Mu'minūn (The Faithful):* 99-100.
2. *Barzakh* technically means 'period between death and resurrection', 'intermediate world' and 'purgatory'.

3- Invoking the Assistance of Allah's Saints ('a)

Question: Isn't invoking the saints of Allah for intercession polytheism and worshipping them?

Response: Belief in the intercession of Allah's saints ('a) on the day of resurrection is one of the basic tenets in which no man doubts. All Islāmic sects hold firm faith in the intercession of prophets ('a), especially the intercession of Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his pure descendants). The only difference of opinion which came to the fore after the appearance of Ibn Taymiyah in the sixth century AH and Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahāb in the mid twelfth century AH is whether we can invoke the intercession of real intercessors whose intercession is indisputable from the standpoint of the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah?

All scholars of religion, except the aforementioned two[1], unanimously hold that it is correct to entreat intercession from the rightful intercessors. The followers of Ibn Taymiyah and Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahāb assert that it is not correct to ask intercessors for intercession in this world, but that one ought to say, 'O Allah! Set the Noble Prophet (s) as my intercessor.'

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1. Ibn Taymiyah and Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahāb.

We will now cite statements from the Book of Allah[1] and the Sunnah of the Noble Prophet to prove the correctness of invoking the intercession of Allah's saints (‘a).

What does the intercession of Allah's saints (‘a) really mean?

The intercession of the Noble Prophet (s) and the other rightful intercessors on the day of resurrection is nothing but their asking Allah to forgive the Islāmic community for its sins. In this case, asking them for intercession is in reality entreating them to invoke Allah to forgive us for our sins, because He accepts their supplication on account of their proximity to His Holy Presence and naturally, the sinner for whom they seek forgiveness gets pardoned by Allah. Also, there isn't the least objection in asking a pious brother and, higher than him, the Noble Prophet (s) to supplicate for him.

Basically, intercession denotes entreating someone in order to persuade them to show mercy and pity on somebody else. In Books of Hadīth and Qur'ānic exegesis, intercession has been interpreted as asking someone for supplication; for instance, Bukhāri, the well known Sunni scholar of Hadīth, in his book entitled Sahīh Bukhāri, has included a chapter called ‘An infallible leader (‘a) ought not to reject the request of his famine afflicted people whenever they ask him to invoke Allah for rains'.

In view of this basic tenet, one ought not to hold any misgivings and doubts with respect to intercession, whose reality is asking for supplication, because requesting a

1. That is, the Holy Qur'ān.

pious person to pray for one is a praiseworthy deed, and entreating prophets (s) and Allah's saints ('a) for supplication is even more laudable. Besides this, some of the Noble Prophet's companions used to ask (s) Allah's Messenger during his lifetime to entreat Allah on their behalf. We will hereunder adduce examples of this:

1- The Hadīth of Anas bin Mālik ('a)

Tirmithi, one of the authors of the four authentic Sunni books of Hadīth, thus transmits from Anas bin Mālik, 'I asked the Noble Prophet (s) to intercede [with Allah] on my behalf on the day of resurrection. The Noble Prophet (s) said, "I will do so." I asked, "Where should I find you on that day?" He answered, "Next to the Bridge."'[1]

Anas, inspired by his primordial nature that asking for intercession is nothing other than requesting for supplication, entreated the Noble Prophet (s) to intercede with Allah on his behalf. Allah's Messenger (s) also promised to fulfill Anas' request without even imagining that requesting for intercession is polytheism, and he did not even forbid Anas from making such an entreaty.

2- The Hadīth of Sawād bin Qārib

Sawād bin Qārib was one of the Noble Prophet's (s) companions who recited poems requesting Allah's Messenger (s) to intercede with Allah on his behalf. Thus is a couplet of one his poems:

O Noble Prophet! Be my intercessor on of the day of resurrection,

1. Sunan Tirmithi, 4/621/ Hadīth no. 2433.

A day when the intercession of other people will not avail Sawād bin Qārib even the speck of a date stone.

3- The Hadīth of Abū Bakr

When the Noble Prophet (s) departed this corporeal life, they shrouded his body with a piece of cloth and were waiting for Muslims to gather around the Mosque in order to perform the funeral ablution, prayer and burial rites. Then Abū Bakr arrived and entered the Noble Prophet's (s) house. He removed the piece of cloth from the Messenger's (s) face and threw himself on the Noble Prophet's (s) body. He kissed it and said, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. You are pure and impeccable both in life and after death. O Muhammad! Remember us to your Lord.'[1]

The last sentence, 'Remember us with your Lord', alludes to nothing but an entreaty for intercession.

4- The Hadīth of ‘Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a)

Historians and scholars of Hadīth recount that when the Noble Prophet (s) passed away, 'Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a) got busy with performing the funeral ablution of Allah's Messenger (s). Then he said:

'*May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! With your death the process of prophethood, revelation and heavenly messages has stopped, which had not stopped at the death of other prophets. Your position with us (members of your family) is so special that your grief has become a source of*

1. Sirah Halabi, 3/474, printed by Dār al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

consolation (to us) as against the grief of all others; your grief is also common so that all Muslims share it equally. If you had not ordered endurance and prevented us from bewailing, we would have produced a store of tears and even then the pain would not have subsided, and this grief would not have ended, and they would have been too little of our grief for you. But this death is a matter that can not be reversed nor is it possible to repulse it. May my father and mother die for you! ***Do remember us with Allah and take care of us****.*'[1]

5- The Hadīth of a Youth

Mus'ab bin Islami recounts, 'A youth from our family went to the Noble Prophet (s) and said, "I have a request to make from you."

The Noble Prophet (s) responded, "What is your request?"

The Youth said, "I would like to be one of those on whose behalf you will intercede on the day of resurrection."

The Messenger of Allah (s) asked him, "Who has advised and guided you to ask for intercession?"

The Youth said, "No one. I myself thought about this."

The Noble Prophet (s) said, "On the day of resurrection, I will intercede with Allah on your behalf."'[2]

There are many examples of these kinds of cases, whose recounting will only prolong the discussion.

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1. Nahjul al-Balāgha, sermon no. 233 translation of Sayyid 'Alī Reza.
2. Majma' al-Zawā'id, 10/369.

4- Entreating Allah in the Name of His Saints

Question: Some people entreat Allah in the name of some of His saints (‘a). For instance, they say, ‘O Lord! Heal my patient for the sake and on behalf of the Noble Prophet (s). Considering that Allah owes no one a debt of gratitude, isn’t entreating Allah in the name of His saints polytheism?

Response: What is meant in these kinds of supplications is the right which Allah has granted to His saints (‘a) by virtue of their high rank and status. Entreating Allah to alleviate one’s problems in the name of, and for the sake of, saints is monotheism because in some instances, Allah has said that He owes a debt of gratitude to his servants:

‘*And it was a must for Us to help the faithful*.’[1]

It has been recounted that the Noble Prophet (s) said:

‘*It is incumbent upon Allah to help the one who marries for the sake of preserving chastity*.’[2]

We can deduce from Qur’ānic verses and Hadīths that Allah has granted this kind of right to his servants. That Allah owes no one a debt of gratitude means that no man essentially has a claim on Him, but this does not hinder Him from graciously and courteously calling some

1. *Sūrat al-Rūm (Byzantium):* 47.
2. Jami‘ al-Saghīr of Suyūti, /33.

individuals claimants, and it does not even stop Him from asking for a loan from them:

'*Who is it that will lend Allah a good loan, that He may multiply it for him and [that] there may be a noble reward for him?*'[1]

When burying Fātimah bint Asad, the Noble Prophet (s) thus invoked Allah on her behalf:

'O Lord! Forgive my mother Fātimah bint Asad and raise her status for the sake of your Prophet (s) and in the name of the prophets ('a) who preceded me.'[2]

In *Sahīfat al-Sajjādiyah*[3] and other supplications of the infallible Imāms ('a), we come across a lot of this kind of entreaties in the name of the Noble Prophet (s) and his pure descendants. Those who are interested can refer to these invocations.

1. *Sūrat al-Hadīd (Iron):* 11.
2. Mustadrak Hākim, 3/108; Hiliyat al-Uliya', 3/121; Isti'āb, 3/382.
3. The Psalms of Islām of Imām 'Alī bin Husayn, well known as Imām Sajjād or Zayin al-'Ābidīn.

5- Vowing for other than Allah

Question: Shī'ahs and some other Muslims offer sacrifices for Allah's saints ('a). For instance, they say, 'I sacrifice this sheep for the Noble Prophet (s) and/ or Husayn bin 'Alī ('a) despite that offering sacrifices for other than Allah is not permissible. Would you please elaborate on why they do so?

Response: Offering sacrifices for other than Allah takes two forms:

1- Offering sacrifices for human beings with the intention of winning their pleasure (without taking Allah's pleasure and contentment into consideration).

2- Offering sacrifices for the sake of gaining proximity to Allah and winning his pleasure, and bestowing the divine reward therefrom to one of Allah's saints ('a) so as to win Allah's pleasure.

Without doubt, making offering sacrifices with such a pure intention and objective is a laudable and praiseworthy deed.

What raises questions and even misconceptions in this regard is the similarity and synonymy of the two expressions at the time of offering sacrifices.

Since making solemn vows and pledging sacrifices is an act of worship, it ought to be done for the sake of gaining nearness to Allah. The one who is offering this sacrifice

ought to say, 'I make this sacrifice for the Noble Prophet (s), with the intention of earning Allah's pleasure and getting close to Him.'

This is the correct formula of offering sacrifices, not any other form which people pronounce out of ignorance and/or for concision.

In any case, the question is: why do people offer sacrifices to the Noble Prophet (s) despite the fact that sacrifices ought to be offered only to Allah?

The response is that these sacrifices are made for Allah's sake and the benefit or divine reward therefrom is offered to the Noble Prophet (s). Consider the following verses:

'*Say, "I give you just a single advice: that you rise up for Allah's sake, in twos, or individually*.'[1]

This verse denotes performing a deed for the sake of Allah.

'*Charities are only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for [the freedom of] the slaves and the debtors, and in the way of Allah, and for the traveler. [This is] an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise*.'[2]

It can be inferred from this verse that monotheistic and polytheistic deeds are essentially different; polytheists used to offer their sacrifices in the name of, and for the sake of gaining nearness to, idols whereas monotheists

1. *Sūrat Saba (Sheba):* 46.
2. *Sūrat al-Tawbah (Repentance):* 60.

offer their sacrifices in the name of and for the sake of Allah. In this regard, the Noble Qur'ān states:

'*And what is sacrificed on stone alters to idols.*'[1]

It has been recounted that a man came to the Noble Prophet (s) and said, 'O Prophet of Allah! My mother has passed away and I know that she would have given *sadaqah*[2] had she been alive. Will she receive divine reward if I give *sadaqah* on her behalf?'

The Noble Prophet (s) responded, 'Yes.'

Then the man asked, 'What kind of *sadaqah* has more reward?' The Noble Prophet (s) said, 'Water.'

The man went and dug a well and when it was ready for use, said, 'The divine reward from this well should be given to my mother.'

The spirit and essence of offering sacrifices is to gain nearness to Allah; man pledges to offer an animal and bestow its divine reward to the Noble Prophet (s) so that he may gain proximity to Allah. It may be that Allah will thus cure my patient.

1. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 3.
2. Anything given as charity or alms.

6- Celebrating Birthday and Death Anniversaries of Allah's Saints ('a)

Question: Celebrating birthday and death anniversaries of Allah's saints ('a) is a new phenomenon which was not existent during the era of the Noble Prophet's (s) companions and only sprung up later. Why do we now celebrate these anniversaries?

Response: History bears witness that since the remote past, Muslims used to hold celebrations on the birthday of the Noble Prophet (s) and orators used to eulogize him. It is not exactly clear when these kinds of anniversary celebrations began, but they have been prevalent in Islāmic countries for hundreds of years.

Ahmad bin Muhammad, well known as Qastalāni (d. 92 AH) and one of the prominent Muslim Scholars of the ninth century AH, has thus written about anniversary celebrations which take place in the month when the Noble Prophet (s) was born. He says:

Muslims always hold anniversary celebrations in the month when the Noble Prophet (s) was born. They share food and give charities at night, as well as make merry and perform good deeds twofold. They recite poems congratulating Allah's Messenger (s) and thus demonstrate his virtues and graces. May Allah bless

people who hold anniversary celebrations on the birthday of the Noble Prophet (s).'[1]

Husayn bin Muhammad bin Hassan, well known as Diyārbakri (d. 960 AH) and one of the jurists and historians of Mecca, writes:

Muslims always hold anniversary celebrations on the birthday of the Noble Prophet (s). They share food, offer charities at night, make merry, do good to the poor, and exhibit his graces and virtues.'[2]

These two historical statements of the tenth century AH indicate that celebrating birth anniversaries of Allah's saints ('a) have remote origins in the History of Islām and that Muslim scholars and intellectuals used to approve of this deed, whose significance and purpose is nothing but showing love to the Noble Prophet (s).

Bearing this in mind, we will now explain the juristic proof for the legality of holding these anniversary celebrations:

Affection and Reverence for the Noble Prophet (s) is One of the Basic Tenets of Islām

Affection and reverence for the Noble Prophet (s) is an ordinance of the Holy Qur'ān which no man can refute, and holding anniversary celebrations on his birthday is a manifestation and actualization of this basic tenet. Two Qur'ānic verses will suffice to prove our assertion:

1. Al-Mawāhib al-Ladunnyyah, 1/27.
2. Tārīkh al-Khamīs, 1/323.

1- '*Say, "If your fathers and your sons, your brethren, your spouses, your kinsfolk, the possessions that you have acquired, the business you fear may suffer, and the dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His Apostle and to waging jihād in His way, then wait until Allah issues His edict, and Allah does not guide the transgressing lot*."'[1]

This verse categorically explains that loving the Noble Prophet (s) is as obligatory as loving Allah, even though this love is a prerequisite for acting upon his *sharī'ah*[2] and ordinances.

2- In another verse, believers have thus been depicted:

'*Those who believe in him, and help him and follow the light that has been sent down with him, they are the felicitous*.'[3]

This verse gives four orders to Muslims:

1- to believe in the Noble Prophet (s).

2- to love and honor him.

3- to help him in hardships.

4- to follow the light (i.e Qur'ān) that has been sent down with him.

Heedful of these two verses, which state that loving and honoring the Noble Prophet (s) is obligatory, the question that comes to mind is that do the anniversary celebrations which Muslims hold fulfill the orders of these two verses or not? The response is a definite yes, and every person

1. *Sūrat al-Tawbah (Repentance):* 24.
2. Islāmic Divine Law.
3. *Sūrat al-A'rāf (The Elevations):* 157.

who attends these anniversary celebrations will conceive that they are a kind of manifestation of love, affection, respect and honor for the Noble Prophet (s). For this reason, holding anniversary celebrations on the birthday of the Allah's Messenger (s) has Qur'ānic and divine origins. In this case, it obviously can not be an innovated practice (*bid'ah*). Innovated practices are those new customs whose roots and foundations are not found in the Holy Qur'ān and prophetic traditions (*sunnah*).

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Allah states that he has exalted the Noble Prophet's (s) name:

'*Did we not exalt your name?*'[1]

This verse indicates that exalting and eulogizing the Noble Prophet (s) is one of Allah's blessings upon the Noble Prophet (s). One of the ways of exalting and eulogizing Allah's Messenger (s) is holding anniversary celebrations and making merry on his birthday, of course without engaging in vain, futile and sinful activities.

Jesus Christ ('a) declared that the day when the table was sent down is a festival:

'*O Allah! Our Lord! Send down to us a table from the sky, to be a festival for us, for the first ones and the last ones among us and a sign from You, and provide for us; for You are the best of providers.*'[2]

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1. *Sūrat al-Sharh (Opening):* 4.
2. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 114.

Honestly, if the day of sending down the table from the sky, (which is a limited blessing), deserves to be a festival every year, how and why should the birthday of the Noble Prophet (s) or the day when he was delegated as a prophet, (which is a great and eternal divine blessing for mankind), not deserve holding anniversary celebrations and making merry?!

Therefore, Muslims are discharging Allah's orders to love, honor and exalt the Noble Prophet (s) whenever they hold anniversary celebrations on his birthday and exhibit his virtues and merits, as well as intone Qur'ānic verses which were sent down on his account and recite poems in his praise. It is for this purpose that they hold anniversary celebrations on this day, without ascribing this festival to the Divine Law of Islām, and selecting this day for these celebrations has no connection to Islāmic Law.

7- Making Pilgrimage to Holy Mausoleums

Question: Is making pilgrimage to holy mausoleums recommendable?

Response: Making pilgrimage to holy shrines has positive effects, some of which we will mention hereunder:

Visiting holy mausoleums, have invaluable and life-giving effects. Upon witnessing man's essential inability, as well as the decadence of material power and wealth, a discerning man perceives the transient nature of the world and begins to seek a solution for himself. He begins to conceive the goal of the cosmos and thus emancipates himself from the vortex of heedlessness and egoism, and meditate on how to attain eschatological bliss and eternal life.

The Noble Prophet (s) hinted at this instructional point when he said, 'Visit graves because they remind one about their eternal abode.'[1]

In another statement, he says, 'Visit graves so that you may take lessons from them.'[2]

What has been said pertains to visiting the graves of ordinary people, and higher than that is visiting the graves of martyrs and religious combatants who have sacrificed their blood and lost their lives to defend the honor and

1. *Sunan Ibn Mājah,* 1/500/ Hadīth no. 1569.
2. Kanz al-'Ummal, 15/647/ Hadīth no. 42558.

glory of Islām as well as to protect great human and divine ideals.

In addition to the positive, constructive and instructional effects of visiting the graves of martyrs who have died in the way of truth, this practice is a kind of pledging loyalty to them and the ideals they died for. By his presence, the visitor announces that he is loyal to the way of martyrs and that he will protect their divine and invaluable ideals.

For more clarity of this matter, let us consider this example:

'Before performing the ritual circumambulation around the Ka'bah, the pilgrim places his hand on the Black Stone (*al-Hajar al-aswād*) and swears allegiance with Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl[1], promising to be steadfast in monotheism and to diligently propagate and spread its message. The pilgrim places his hands on Abraham's remains and promises to be loyal to his ideals because he has no access to Abraham ('a) himself.

It has been recorded in Islāmic Hadīths that when a pilgrim to the House of Allah comes to the Black Stone, he ought to say, 'I have discharged the responsibility which was placed in my trust and I have renewed my allegiance so that you may bear witness to it.'[2]

Making pilgrimage to the martyrs of Badr, Uhud, Karbala and the other beloved people whose blood has been shed for Islām all portray this reality, and with their presence at

1. Abraham the friend of Allah.
2. Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, 10/400/ bāb no.12 of abwāb al-Tawāf, Hadīth no. 1.

these holy places and burial chambers, and their salutations, pilgrims pledge to continue the way of these pure souls.

In other words, visiting the graves of martyrs is a kind of showing respect and honor for them, and because a martyr is one who has been killed for his ideals and convictions, any person who pays tribute to a martyr is in reality paying tribute to his ideals and considers himself a follower of his way and ideology.

Making Pilgrimage to the Noble Prophet's (s) Holy Shrine

Making pilgrimage to the Noble Prophet's holy shrine or his pure successors (‘a), in addition to paying tribute to them and thanking them for their sacrifices in guiding mankind, is also a kind of swearing allegiance with them. In one of his statements about making pilgrimage to the holy mausoleums of the infallibles (‘a), the eighth Imām[1] (‘a) said:

‘Every Imām has a covenant and agreement with his friends and Shiites, and pilgrimage to the holy mausoleums of the Imāms (‘a) is a part of this covenant.’[2]

In reality, when the pilgrim makes pilgrimage to the holy mausoleums of the Noble Prophet (s) and the Imāms (‘a), he makes a covenant not to follow any other way and practice, save theirs.

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1. Imām Reza (‘a).
2. Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, 10/346/ bāb 44 of abwāb al-Mazār, Hadīth no. 2.

Thus says the pilgrim to the holy mausoleum of the Noble Prophet (s):

O Prophet of Allah! If the *Muhājirin*[1] and *Ansār*[2] had pledged their allegiance to defend you and your prophetic mission;[3] and if the women of Mecca had sworn allegiance to you and had pledged that they would shun polytheism and sin;[4] and if the sinful believers had been ordered to come to you so that you may plead with Allah for their forgiveness;[5] O Prophet of Allah, and O Intercessor of the Muslim community, here and now, in your holy mausoleum, I too, pledge allegiance to you that

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1. Immigrants.
2. People of Medīnah who helped and supported the Noble Prophet and those who had migrated with him.
3. 'Allah was certainly pleased with the faithful when they swore allegiance to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down composure on them, and requited them with a victory near at hand and abundant spoils that they will capture, and Allah is all-mighty, all-wise.' *Sūrat al-Fath (Victory):* 18-19.
4. 'O Prophet! If the faithful women come to you, to take the oath of allegiance to you, [pledging] that they shall not ascribe any partners to Allah, that they shall not steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor utter any slander that they may have intentionally fabricated, nor disobey you in what is right, then accept their allegiance, and plead for them to Allah for forgiveness. Indeed Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful.' *Sūrat al-Mumtahanah (The Woman Tested):* 12.
5. 'We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allah's leave. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful.' *Sūrat al-Nisā' (Women):* 64.

I will protect your ideals and will shun polytheism and other sins and in return for this, request you to plead with Allah for my forgiveness.

We will not recount Hadīths about visiting graves because all Islāmic schools of thought hold that doing so is a recommended deed. Sometimes the Noble Prophet (s) used to go to the sacred cemetery in Medīnah by the name of *Baqī‘* and would thus address the people buried there, ‘Peace be on you O faithful people dwelling in this abode. Tomorrow, Allah will grant you what He promised. You are living in between death and the Resurrection, and we too will join you one day. O Lord! Forgive the dwellers of Baqī.’[1]

1. Sahīh Muslim, 3/63, kitāb al-jinā’iz.

8- Women and Making Pilgrimage to Holy Mausoleums, as well as Responses to Two Questions

Question: Is making pilgrimage to holy mausoleums not forbidden to women?

Response: Women and men are equal in the eyes of the law that pertains to visiting graves of their beloved ones and/ or making pilgrimage to holy mausoleums of Allah's saints ('a) because Islāmic laws apply equally to both men and women, except where there is reason or proof for specification. In respect to women making pilgrimage to holy mausoleums, not only is there no reason for specification, but there is also proof for the equality of the two genders. The Noble Prophet (s) thus addresses the Islāmic community, 'Hasten to visit graves because they remind one about the hereafter.'[1]

In another Hadīth, he states, 'Go visit graves because there are in it lessons for you.'[2]

It is true that apparently this statement is addressed to men, but as everyone knows, all Qur'ānic verses and Hadīths which are apparently directed at men also include women, unless there is a reason or proof of their being unequivocal. That is why even if Qur'ānic verses which

1. Sunan Ibn Mājah, 1/500/ Hadīth no. 1569.
2. Kanz al-'Ummāl, 15/647/ Hadīth no. 42558.

call on men to maintain the prayer and give *zakāt* address men, they also include women:

'*And maintain the prayer and give zakāt. Any good that you send ahead for your souls, you shall find it with Allah. Indeed Allah sees best what you do*.'[1]

In the original Arabic, this verse addresses men, but the resultant law applies to both genders. Therefore, even if the above quoted Hadīths address men only, they nonetheless apply to both genders.

Besides these Hadīths, there are other traditions which denote that it is permissible for women to make pilgrimage to holy mausoleums. We will hereunder recount some of these Hadīths:

1- In his Sahīh[2], Muslim transmits from the Noble Prophet (s), 'Angel Gabriel descended [from heaven] and said to me, "Your Lord has commanded that you should hasten to visit the dwellers of [the cemetery of] Baqi' and plead with Him for their forgiveness."'

The Noble Prophet (s) rose up from his bed and went to Baqi'. 'Āishah followed the Messenger of Allah. She asked him, 'How should I salute them?' The Noble Prophet (s) stated, 'Say, "Peace be on you of dwellers of this land, believers and Muslims. May Allah forgive the departed and the ones to come."'[3]

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1. *Sūrat al-Baqarah (The Heifer):* 110.
2. Sahīh Muslim, one of the four authentic Sunni sources of Hadīth.
3. *Sahīh Muslim,* 3/64.

This demonstration pivots on teaching the method of performing pilgrimage to holy mausoleums to ‘Āishah. If visiting graves or making pilgrimage to holy mausoleums is forbidden to women, then why did the Noble Prophet (s) teach his wife the method of performing it?

Besides this, when ‘Āishah narrates this account for other women, everyone construes that visiting the cemetery of Baqi’ is permissible to everyone and that the law [of making pilgrimage to holy mausoleums] applies equally to the Noble Prophet (s) and the believing women.

2- After the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s) Fātimah (‘a) his honorable daughter and one of the people of the cloak[1] used to go to the grave of their uncle at Uhud and they would perform two rak‘ats[2] of prayer and cry.

Hākim Nishābūri, after transmitting this tradition, says, ‘The transmitters of this Hadīth are all trustworthy and just, and there is in this regard no difference between them and the transmitters of Bukhāri and Muslim.[3]

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1. The people of the cloak consist of the Noble Prophet (s), Fātimah (‘a), ‘Alī (‘a), Hasan (‘a) and Husayn (‘a). A Hadīth has been transmitted from ‘Āisha in *Sahih Muslim* 24 /1883, book of the virtues of the Prophet’s (s) companions, section nine, that she said, ‘The Noble Prophet (s) had a cloak made of black wool on his shoulders; he covered Hassan, Husayn, Fātima and ‘Alī with it and said, ‘*Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, and purify you with a thorough purification.*’
Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates): 33.
2. That is, cycle or unit of the length of prayer.
3. Mustadrak Hākim, 1/377, printed by Dār al-Ma‘rifah.

3- Tirmithi transmits from ‘Abdullah bin Abī Malīkah, ‘When ‘Abd al-Rahmān the son of Abū Bakr died at a place called Hubshā, they brought his corpse to Mecca for burial. Later on when his sister, ‘Āishah, visited Mecca, she went to his grave and recited two poems which bespoke the intensity of her sorrow and grief.[1]

4- Bukhāri writes, ‘The Noble Prophet (s) saw a woman crying besides a grave. He said to her, “Be composed and patient over the death of your beloved.”’[2]

Bukhāri has not recounted the rest of this Hadīth, but Abū Dāwud has (in his Sunan) thus continued, ‘The woman did not recognize the Noble Prophet (s) and objected to him, ‘What has my grief got to do with you?’ Another woman next to her said, ‘Don’t you recognize this man? He is the Prophet of Allah.’ The grief afflicted woman went to the Noble Prophet’s (s) house to apologize, asking him to forgive her because she had not recognized him. The Noble Prophet (s) said to her, ‘Forbearance in tragedy is praiseworthy.’[3]

If visiting graves were harām,[4] the Noble Prophet (s) would have clearly told her that her action was harām and that she ought to leave the grave, whereas he only advised her to be patient.

1. Sunan Tirmithi, 3/371.
2. *Sahīh Bukhāri,* 2/93.
3. Sunan Abī Dāwud, 3/192.
4. That is, prohibited by Islāmic Law.

Responses to Two Questions

There are some people[1] who have prohibited women from visiting graves, demonstrating their prohibition by adducing the following two Hadīths:

1- 'May Allah exclude from his mercy women who visit graves.'[2]

Response: This Hadīth is devoid of the necessary condition for demonstrating the prohibition of visiting graves because the aforementioned traditions have abrogated it. Fortunately, some Sunni scholars of Hadīth have considered it repealed; for instance, Tirmithi the transmitter of Hadīth says, 'This tradition relates to the period before visiting graves was permitted [to all]. When the Noble Prophet (s) permitted visiting graves, it equally applied to all.'[3]

Qurtubi says, 'This Hadīth pertains to women who spend most of their time at gravesites and thus disregard or trample on their husbands' rights.

2- Ibn Mājah transmits from 'Alī bin Abī Tālib ('a) that the Noble Prophet (s) came out [of his house] and saw women sitting on the ground. He asked them, 'Why are you sitting on the ground?' They responded, 'We are waiting for a dead body.' He again asked, 'Are you going to perform the funeral ablution on it?' They answered, 'No.' He asked once again, 'Are you going to put it in the grave?' They said, 'No.' He told them, 'Return to your

1. That is, some Sunnis.
2. Sunan Ibn Mājah, 1/503; Sunan Abī Dāwud, 3/218/ Hadīth no. 3236.
3. Sunan Tirmithi, 3/371.

homes. You are sinners, not possessors of [divine] reward.'[1]

Response: From the viewpoint of the chain of transmission and denotation, this Hadīth is not worthy adducing as proof that women have been prohibited from visiting graves because one of the people on its channel of transmission is Dīnār bin 'Amr, whom authorities on transmitters of Hadīth have called an anonymous transmitter, a liar, and a sinner.

Can a Hadīth whose transmitter is so weak and defective be adduced for demonstration?

Likewise, assuming that its chain of transmission is authentic, its purport or theme is not related to visiting graves because the Noble Prophet's censure was directed at women who were not going to the grave to perform an obligatory or recommended deed, and this has no connection whatsoever with going to graves.

The point worths mentioning is that Islām is an easy religion which is harmonious with man's primordial nature and innate disposition. In this regard, the Messenger of Allah stated, 'Islām is a firm religion, so enter into its fold with compromise and tolerance.'[2]

The only thing which can console the burning heart of a mother whose mature and brave son has passed away and has been buried under layers of clay is visiting his grave. Forbidding this mother from going to the grave of her child will result in psychological pressure on her mind.

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1. Fath al-Bāri, 3/148/ bāb 31/ Hadīth no. 1283.
2. Musnad Ahmad, 3/199.

How then can Islāmic law forbid such a rational deed which is prevalent all across the globe and still call Islām an easy and not difficult religion?!

Basically, going to graves reminds one about the hereafter and is accompanied by reciting the Holy Qur'ān, especially the opening sūrah, for beloved ones. How then can women be deprived of this grace and blessing?

In other words, the philosophy of going to graves, which is reminding one about the hereafter and taking lessons from the dead, can not be particularized.

Of course visiting graves does not have to be accompanied by sin and misdeeds, and assuming that it had been forbidden, perhaps the reason for this prohibition was that during that era women never used to adhere to these conditions.

9- Building Mausoleums on top of Graves

Question: Is erecting mausoleums on top of graves permissible?

Response: The permissibility of building mausoleums on the graves of infallible people (‘a) can be proved in various ways. We will now adduce some instances of this:

1- Preserving Graves of Prophets (‘a) is a Tradition practiced by all Pious Ancestors of Mankind

History bears witness that building mausoleums and preserving the graves of Allah’s saints (‘a) and prophets (‘a) is an ancient tradition of mankind and that long before the rise of the star of Islām, all graves of the prophets of Bani Isrā’il[1] and other people had mausoleums erected on them and that Muslims diligently endeavored to preserve and safeguard these mausoleums when they conquered areas of Palestine, Jordan and Syria. Up to this day, these mausoleums still stand in the same shape that they did when the aforementioned lands were conquered. Not only did Muslims not damage these mausoleums, but also earnestly undertook to reconstruct and rebuild them and employed people to work at these places and preserve them.

1. That is, the Children of Israel.

2- Preserving Relics is tantamount to Safeguarding Ideals

Basically, preserving relics, especially those of the Noble Prophet (s), such as his place of burial and the graves of his wives, children and companions, as well as the houses in which he lived, and the Mosques in which he prayed, has benefits which we will hint at in the course of an introduction.

Today, twenty centuries after the birth of Jesus Christ (‘a), his existence and that of his mother Mary (‘a), the Evangel,[1] his disciples and companions has become a historical myth about which some Orientalists are in doubt. The reason for this is that there is no tangible relic from the existence or fundamental reality of Jesus Christ (‘a); for instance, the exact point of his birth and the house in which he was born are not clear, and no one is certain about where he was buried. His divine book, the Evangel (or Gospel), has been subjected to distortion. The four Gospels which are currently available, every one of which ends with the story of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion and burial, are definitely not related to him and were doubtlessly written after him. It is for this reason that most researchers of the four Gospels regard them to be works of literature of the second century AD. But if all relics related to him had been preserved, they would have borne witness to his existence and hence there would be no pretext left for these skeptics to harbor doubts about his existence.

1. That is, the Gospel.

But Muslims categorically tell the world that one thousand and four hundred years ago in Hijāz,[1] a man was delegated to lead mankind. This man had great success in his mission and all relics related to him have been preserved, such that there is not the least doubt about the life and existence of the great man. The house in which he was born is clearly known, and Mount Hira, where he used to receive divine revelation, his Mosque where he used to pray, the house in which he was buried, the houses and graves of his children, wives and relatives, the graves of his successors and caliphs, et cetera et cetera.

Now if we destroy all these relics, we would naturally have eradicated signs and proofs of his existence and therefore would have prepared the ground for the enemies of Islām.

For this reason, demolishing relics of the Noble Prophet (s) and his household (‘a), in addition to being some kind of disrespect and an affront to Allah’s Messenger (‘a), is also a war with the manifestations of Islām and the fundamental reality of prophethood.

Islām is an eternal and everlasting religion, and it is a creed which will guide mankind up to the day of resurrection. Generations born after thousands of years will have to admit the fundamental reality and truth of Islām. That is why in order to secure this goal, we have to continually safeguard all the relics and signs of the Noble Prophet (s) and thus preserve religion for future generations. We ought not to let the prophetic mission of

1. Or Mecca in Western Saudi Arabia.

our prophet suffer the same fate as that of the religion of Jesus Christ (‘a).

3- Elevating the Houses of Prophets (‘a)

In a verse well known as ‘the Verse of the Light’, the Gracious Qur’ān compares the light of Allah to a very bright lamp which shines like a radiant star. It then states in the following verse that this bright light is like houses in which pious men invoke the Name of Allah every morning and evening:

‘*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp -the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star- lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it. Light upon light. Allah guides to His Light whomever He wishes. Allah draws parables for mankind, and Allah has knowledge of all things. In houses Allah has allowed to be raised and wherein His name is celebrated, He is glorified therein, morning and evening, by men whom neither trading nor bargaining distracts from the remembrance of Allah, and the maintenance of prayer and the giving of zakāt. They are fearful of a day wherein the heart and the sign will be transformed, so that Allah may reward them by the best of what they have done, and enhance them out of His grace, and Allah provides for whomever He wishes without any reckoning.*’[1]

Now we have to find out what ‘houses’ in the verse, ‘*In houses Allah has allowed to be raised’,* means. Definitely,

1. *Sūrat al-Nūr (Light)*: 35-38.

a house is not a mosque, because in Arabic, *bayt* (=house) is derived from the etymon *buyūtah*, which means passing the night into morning, and a house is called *bayt* because that is where man passes his night into day.

Wherever the Holy Qur'ān speaks about sanctuaries or places of worship, it employs the word mosque or mosques and it has used this word twenty eight times both in the singular and plural whereas it has employed the word *bayt* whether in the singular or plural to mean house and residence. The word *bayt* has been used sixty six times in the Holy Qur'ān to mean dwelling place. It is to be concluded that in the language of the Gracious Qur'ān, *bayt* (house) and *masjid* (mosque) do not mean one and the same thing and considering them to be identical and synonymous is a claim that is devoid of proof.

Definitely, 'houses' in the above quoted verse means dwelling places of prophets ('a) and pious people in which Allah's Name is invoked, glorified as well as celebrated morning and evening. Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūti transmits from Anas bin Mālik that he said, 'When the Noble Prophet (s) recited the verse *"In houses Allah has allowed to be raised"* in the mosque, one of his companions stood up and asked, "Which houses?" The Noble Prophet (s) responded, "Houses in which prophets lived." Then Abū Bakr stood up and said, "O Prophet of Allah! Is the house of 'Alī ('a) and Fātima ('a) one of those houses which have to be elevated and raised?" The Noble Prophet (s) responded, "Yes, it is among the most important of them."'[1]

1. Al-Dur al-Manthūr, 6/ 203.

So far it has become clear that 'houses' in the above quoted verse means dwelling places of prophets ('a), not mosques. Now we have to find out what elevating and raising means. Two opinions have been offered in this regard:

1- The first opinion is that it means physical elevation.

2- The second opinion is that it means spiritual elevation.

According to the first theory, the verse means raising walls and the roof, as another verse states:

'*Is it you whose creation is more prodigious or the sky which He has built? He raised its vault, and fashioned it*.'[1]

But because the Holy Qur'ān speaks about houses which already have walls and roofs, naturally raising in the above quoted verse means spiritual elevation; that is to say, raising their status and honoring them, and one of the manifestations of raising these houses is preserving them from every kind of impurity as well as wear and tear.

These qualities are ascribed to these houses in recognition of the presence in them of great men who used to invoke, glorify and celebrate Allah's Name and whom neither trading nor bargaining distracts from the remembrance of Allah, and the maintenance of prayer and the giving of *zakāt*. Allah has given permission to respect and pay homage to these houses in honor of pious people who lived therein, and to protect them from destruction and impurity.

1. *Sūrat al-Nāzi 'āt (The Wresters):* 28.

We all know that the Noble Prophet (s) was laid to rest in his house; that is to say, he was buried right in the place where he used to invoke, glorify and remember Allah. His house, according to the above quoted verse, has distinction as well as respect, and every kind of destruction, demolition and contamination of it is not only forbidden, but also contrary to the order of the Holy Qur'ān.

Also, maybe some houses of Medīnah are graves and resting places of great people. According to an authentic Hadīth,[1] Fātimah Zahra (‘a) was laid to rest in her house, which is still existent up to today.

Imām Hādi (‘a) and Imām ‘Askari (‘a) were also entombed in the houses in which they used to worship Allah. In this case, these houses, according to the explicit statement of the aforementioned verse, these houses have distinction and status and destroying is contrary to the purport of this verse.

In the precincts of Bani Hāshim in Medīnah, the houses of Imām Hasan (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a) as well as the school of Imām Sādiq (‘a) were existent a while ago and I myself[2] had the honor of visiting these places a few years ago. Unfortunately, all these relics were destroyed under the pretext of expanding the Noble Prophet's (s) Mosque, despite the fact that expanding the Noble Prophet's (s) Mosque is not incompatible with preserving these relics.

1. Kāfi, 1/461.
2. That is, Ayatollah Ja‘far Subhāni.

4- Preserving Graves is a Sign of Love and Affection

Loving the Noble Prophet (s) and his household is one of the unequivocal principles of Islām and there are Qur'ānic verses and Hadīths which bear witness to this. The Noble Prophet (s) stated, 'Everyone who has three things will taste the sweetness of faith; one of those three is that Allah and His Messenger should be more beloved to him…"[1]

There are many ways of loving the Noble Prophet (s) and Allah's saints ('a), some of which are propagating and disseminating their message, preserving their relics and safeguarding their memorials as well as building memorial mausoleums on their graves. All these are expressions of love for the Messenger ('a) and saints of Allah. In his Sunn, Tirmithi recounts, 'The Noble Prophet (s) held the hands of Hasan ('a) and Husayn ('a) and said, "Every person who loves these two children as well as their mother and father will have the same status with me on the day of resurrection."'[2]

We all know that the corpse of Hassan ('a) was entombed at Baqi' in Medīnah and that the corpse of Husayn ('a) was buried in Karbala, and that their tombs are and will always be places of pilgrimage for Muslims. Building any kind of shelter or mausoleum to protect their holy graves is an expression of love for these two eminent great-grandsons of the Noble Prophet (s), and this deed will

1. Jāmi' al-Usūl, 1/37/ Hadīth no. 22 (Also refer to Hadīths no. 20 and 21).
2. Jāmi' al-Usūl, 9/157/ Hadīth no. 6706.

have the same reward as that we have already mentioned in the above quoted verse.

Today, world communities try in different ways to keep the remembrance of their national and religious heroes, such as army personalities, political figures and social reformers, alive and that is why they bury them with grandeur in pleasant places under stately tombs so that future generations, just like today's generation, may always remember and honor these personalities. It is also proper for us Muslims to honor our great and peerless personalities in various ways, one of which is building Mausoleums over their tombs.

Considering that former pious communities used to preserve the graves of the Noble Prophets (‘a), safeguarding relics is tantamount to protecting fundamental realities, maintaining houses of Allah's saints (‘a) is a kind of elevating them, and preserving relics of Allah's saints (‘a) is a manifestation of love and affection for them. There remains no room for anyone to harbor doubts and misgivings that building mausoleums on the tombs of Allah's saints (‘a) is correct according to divine law and that it is a desirable and an ideal thing.

A Hadīth from Imām Sādiq (‘a) in regard to Renovating Graves of Allah's Saints (‘a)

Imām Sādiq (‘a) stated, ‘My father[1] transmitted to me from his father[2], who transmitted from his father Husayn bin ‘Alī (‘a), who also transmitted from his father

1. Imām Muhammad bin ‘Alī (‘a).
2. Imam ‘Alī bin Husayn (‘a).

‘Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a) that the Noble Prophet (s) said, “O ‘Alī (‘a)! You will be killed and buried in Iraq. ‘Alī (‘a) says, ‘I asked the Noble Prophet (s), “What reward will the people who continually make pilgrimage to our graves and strive to renovate them receive?” The Noble Prophet (s) responded, “O Aba al-Hassan (‘a)! Allah has made a part of your grave and the tombs of your children from the land of heaven and a part of them from the land of the earth, and He has made the hearts of noble and chosen people be affectionate towards you. They will bear hardships and sufferings in your way and they will renovate your tombs for the sake of gaining nearness to Allah and manifesting love for the Messenger of Allah.”’[1]

1. Tahthib al-Ahkām of Shaykh Tūsi, 6/22/ Hadīth no.5.

10- Praying besides Graves of Allah's Saints ('a)

Question: Is offering ritual prayers and supplication to Allah besides the tombs of prophets ('a) and Allah's saints ('a) legal according to Islāmic Law?

Response: One of the things to which the Wahābis are especially averse is offering ritual prayers and supplication to Allah besides the graves of His saints ('a). For some time, they used to consider these [two] deeds as *makrūh*[1]. With the passage of time, this issue went beyond being *makrūh* to being *harām*[2] and then it reached a stage where it is now considered as *shirk*[3]. We will now demonstrate and expose the truth of this matter by adducing verses of the Holy Qur'ān and practices of Muslims.

1- The Holy Qur'ān orders pilgrims who visit the House of Allah to offer prayer at the Abraham's Station (*maqām Ibrāhīm*):

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1. That is, undesirable or disapproved, but not necessarily forbidden, by Islāmic Law.
2. That is, forbidden by Islāmic Law.
3. That is, polytheism.

‘*And [remember] when We made the House a place of reward*[1] *for mankind and a sanctuary, [declaring], “Take the venue of prayer from Abraham’s Station.”*[2] *We charged Abraham and Ishmael [with its upkeep, saying], “Purify My House for those who go around it, [for] those who make it a retreat And [for] those who bow and prostrate.*”’[3]

Now the questions are: Why does Allah order pilgrims to offer prayers at the Station of Abraham (‘a)? Is it not for us to seek blessings from the Station of the master of monotheism?

2- According to Hadīths, on the Night of the Ascension (*mi‘rāj*), the Noble Prophet (s) landed in Medīnah, on Mount Sinai and Bayt Laham. He offered prayers in all these places. The Archangel Gabriel asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Do you know in which places you have offered your prayers? You have offered your prayers in Medīnah, where you will migrate to, and on Mount Sinai, where Allah spoke to Moses (‘a), and in Bayt Laham, where Jesus Christ (‘a) was born.[4]

Taking this Hadīth into consideration, is there any difference between a place of birth and a place of death?

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1. ‘Or ‘confluence,’ or ‘resort,’ depending on whether the term *mathābah* is taken to mean a place of spiritual reward, a place of gathering, or a place to which one frequently returns.
2. Abraham’s Station (*maqām Ibrāhīm*) is a spot at a few meters’ distance from the Ka‘bah where a stone relic is kept that bears the footprint of Abraham, behind which the pilgrims offer the prayer of the *tawāf*.
3. *Sūrat al-Baqarah (The Heifer):* 125.
4. Al-Khasā’is al-Kubrā of Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūti, 1/154.

Or is it that the above quoted Qur'ānic verse and Hadīth all point to one general yardstick and that is that the land which was in contact with men of God and champions of monotheism is a blessed place and that it is far better for man to worship Allah in that place? We all know that offering prayers in these places does not amount to worshiping human beings, but is praying to Allah in blessed places.

Sometimes the struggles of a patient man and a pious woman become the reason why the places where they set foot develop into places in which people worship Allah; for instance, because Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, patiently bore a lot of hardships and pains in the way of Allah, He made the place where she had set foot to become a place of worship and ordered pilgrims who visit the House of Allah to pace back and forth (go to and fro) seven times between Safã and Marwa in the same way that Hagar strived [in the way of Allah]. If the patience and forbearance of this great woman have been the reason why the place where she set foot should become blessed and a place of worship for pilgrims, why should the place where the body of the Noble Prophet (s) is buried not be blessed and holy, considering that he bore more hardships and tribulations in the way of Allah than Hagar did!!!

What is surprising is that Ibn Qayyim, the student of Ibn Taymiyyah, has unconsciously admitted this truth. He says, ‘Finally, Hagar and her son's patient bearing of loneliness due to separation [from Abraham (‘a)] and the mother's readiness for her son to be sacrificed resulted in the place where mother and son had set their foot becoming a center of worship for pious men and women. This is the tradition of Allah (*Sunnat Allah*) that He

elevates and raises whoever he desires from among his creatures.'[1]

3- It is now fourteen centuries that Muslims of the world have been worshiping Allah besides the tomb of the Noble Prophet (s). If offering prayers besides the burial place of the Noble Prophet (s) is *makrūh*,[2] *harām*[3], or *bātil*[4], then why did none of the great companions of the Noble Prophet (s), their immediate successors, and eminent Islāmic scholars, not protest against this practice? And can prayer be said to be *bātil* and/ or *makrūh* if someone offers it standing behind and directly facing the tomb of the Noble Prophet (s)?

4- We are all aware of the high and preeminent status of the Noble Prophet's (s) daughter. She is great woman about whom the Messenger of Allah (s) said, 'Fātimah is a part of me. Whoever angers her has angered me.'[5]

This same daughter of the Noble Prophet (s) used to go to visit the grave of her uncle Hamzah on Fridays (*Jum'ah*) and would offer prayers besides the tomb and shed tears.[6]

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1. Zād al-Ma'ād of Ibn Qīm, 1/17, printed in Cairo, Afsat, Dār al-Fikr.
2. That is, undesirable or disapproved, but not necessarily forbidden, by Islāmic Law.
3. That is, forbidden by Islāmic Law.
4. That is, invalid, or null and void, or wrong, or false.
5. Sahīh Bukhāri, 5 / bāb manāqib qarābah rasūlullah (s)/ Hadīth no. 3714.
6. Sunan of Bayhaghi, 4/78; Mustadrak al-Sahīhayn of Hākim, 1/377.

5- For many years after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s), 'Āishah, his wife, used to offer her prayers and worship Allah in the room in which his holiness (s) had been buried, and no one raised any objection or protest against her [worshipping Allah besides the Noble Prophet's (s) grave].

In [the book entitled] *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, Samhūdi reports that 'Āishah said, 'There was no hindrance between three graves and me, until the day when 'Umar was buried in my room. After that, a wall got erected between the three graves and me.'[1]

This issue shows that for nearly fifteen years, the wife of the Noble Prophet (s) used to offer her prayers besides the grave of Allah's Messenger (s) and it has not been recorded in any book of history that she had once left her room for prayer.

6- We all know that *hijr Ismāīl* is the place where Hagar and Ishmael her son were laid to rest, and that no Islāmic jurist has ever issued a *fatwā* (verdict or decree) that it is *makrūh* and *bātil* to offer prayers at *hijr Ismāīl*.

However, this group[2] has not only forbidden offering prayers besides the graves of martyrs (*shuhadā*), but also believes that it is not permissible to face the Noble Prophet's (s) room while supplicating to Allah but that one has to face the Ka'bah when entreating Allah. They assert this, despite that Abū Ja'far Mansūr had asked the jurist of Medīnah, Mālik bin Anas, in the holy mausoleum of the Noble Prophet (s), 'Should I face the Ka'bah while

1. Wafā' al-Wafā' of Samhūdi, 2/544.
2. That is, the followers of Ibn Taymiyyah and the Wahābis.

supplicating or the tomb of Allah's Messenger (s)?' Mālik answered him, 'Why should you turn your back to the Noble Messenger (s) while he is the means by which you and your father Adam will attain salvation? Face the Noble Prophet (s) and ask him to intercede with Allah on your behalf. Allah has made him your intercessor.'[1]

Bearing these six proofs in mind, there remains no reason [or excuse] to consider mausoleums of prophets ('a) and Allah's saints ('a), even the lands of their death, as being devoid of value, rather, we need to know that offering prayers in these holy places is correct and acceptable.

1. Wafā' al-Wafā' of Samhūdi, 2/1376.

11- Mourning for Martyrs

Question: What philosophy lies in mourning for martyrs who lost their lives defending the truth?

Response: The philosophy which lies in mourning for martyrs who lost their lives defending the truth is honoring and remembering them, as well as preserving their school of thought, whose basic principles are based on self-sacrifice in the way of religion (*dīn*) and on not surrendering to humiliation and ignominy. Their logic was that a bloody death is better than an ignominious or disgraceful life. They attained martyrdom for the sake of the honor of Allah's religion and the dignity of the faithful. Commemoration of martyrs results in preserving their logic, other people taking lessons from their sacrifices and pursuing their way.

A martyr is a candle which, by burning, brightens its surroundings, because by getting killed and putting an end to their corporeal life, martyrs liberate the society from chains of servitude and the rule of oppressors. Is honoring such kind of people not good and praiseworthy from the viewpoint of logic? Is it not proper to hold various mourning ceremonies for the revival of the school of martyrdom and honor of martyrs whereas the Noble Messenger (s) used to cry and mourn over the death of ordinary people?

Most mourning ceremonies are held in the name of Husayn bin ʻAlī (ʻa), the leader of martyrs and all lovers

of freedom because more than the other martyrs, he taught all mankind the tradition of living in freedom, and not submitting to oppression and tyranny. He opted for an honorable death under the sword of the enemy rather than live in disgrace, and thus finally met his Lord.

He was in love with self sacrifice in the way of truth; that is why he welcomed martyrdom with happiness and joy.

The enemy offered him protection but he rejected it because he knew that accepting the protection of the enemy would result in living in humiliation, ignominy and real death.[1]

Responses to two questions can be inferred from the above statement:

1- Is the Shiite sect a creed of sorrow and crying?

2- Why do we mourn for Imām Husayn (‘a) while he is in paradise? What benefit does crying for the dwellers of heaven carry?

In response to the first question, we have to say that the Shiite sect is a creed that seeks the truth and justice through *jihād* and struggle; it is not a sect of crying and mourning at all, but at the same time, like the Noble Prophet (s) and his honorable companions, Shiites get affected when they remember their beloved icons who have departed this world and Shiite hearts are full of affection for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). This affection and love leaves its effects in the lives of Shiites.

1. Sharh Nahj al-Balāgha of Ibn Abil Hadīd, 3/249.

In other words, reciting religious poems while manifesting affection and sorrow is a kind of sympathetic and empathetic union with martyrs who died defending the truth, and thus preserving their school of thought, whose basic principles are self-sacrifice in the way of religion and not surrendering to humiliation and ignominy. If these mourning ceremonies are stopped, and martyrs are not commemorated on a yearly basis, the school of altruism and martyrdom will be consigned to oblivion. Shiites, by holding mourning ceremonies in the months of Muharram and Safar, revive the logic of Imām Husayn bin ʻAlī (ʻa), which is the same as that of all martyrs.

In regard to the second question, we have to point out that we Shiites do not cry for Imām Husayn bin ʻAlī (ʻa) because he is in paradise; we are obviously happy and joyful for that. We cry because of the oppression and injustice which he suffered, and for the reason that the Noble Prophet's (s) unique pearl and his seventy two companions were denied water and killed while thirsty, despite being near a river overflowing with water. The Noble Prophet (s) used to cry for his uncle Hamzah not because he was in heaven with the angels, but for the reason that he was killed in a brutal manner. The liver eater, Hind, Abū Sufyan's wife, gave people orders to slit Hamzah's body open and remove his liver, so that she could chew it with her teeth.

To sum up, our discourse has been about the philosophy that lies in Imām Husayn's (ʻa) martyrdom, through which he saved Islām from destruction. A full elaboration of this philosophy lies beyond the scope of this discussion.

Chapter Three:
The Status of the Holy Qur'ān in the Eyes of Shi'ahs

1- The Status of the Holy Qur'ān in the Eyes of Shi'ahs

Question: Is it true that Shi'ahs believe that the Holy Qur'ān has suffered *tahrīf* (falsification or distortion or alteration)?

Response: From the Shiite point of view, the Holy Qur'ān is the only undistorted divine book which up to today still exists and is in possession of all Muslims in that same state in which it was revealed.

The Holy Qur'ān is the only book which is genuinely authentic in its entirety. No other book, possessed by Muslims, except the Holy Qur'ān, is genuinely authentic. All other books, without exception, are liable to critique.

The Holy Qur'ān, from which Muslims must derive both their creeds and law, is the authoritative basis of Islāmic beliefs and law. The Holy Qur'ān is the arbiter or arbitrator once a disagreement regarding an issue arises among Muslims.

In the whole history of Islām, there has not been other than the currently existing Qur'ān. Presently, hundreds of thousands of preserved and written copies of the Holy Qur'ān are found in Shiite general and specialty libraries and homes. There is no other Qur'ān, even with the slightest difference, in the hands of Shiites save the same one that is possessed by all world Muslims.

Ascribing belief in the falsification of the Holy Qur'ān to Shiites is an evil defamation and cruel slander which derives from either ignorance or enmity with Shi'ahs. Only a few Hadīths found in books of traditions / Hadīths, whose apparent purports indicate that Holy Qur'ān has suffered falsification, have been seized with both hands by opponents and used as pretexts to accuse Shiites that they believe in the falsification of the Holy Qur'ān. These Hadīths are devoid of evidentiary value because of their contradiction with the Holy Qur'ān. If this is the basis of accusing Shiites, then other Islāmic sects too, have to be accused of believing that the Holy Qur'ān has been distorted, because there are many Hadīths in their books of tradition which denote falsification of the Holy Qur'ān. We have repeatedly said, books of Hadīth are not the authoritative basis of Islāmic beliefs and law. The basic principles of beliefs have to be derived from definite, authentic sources like the Holy Qur'ān, explicit and categorical reason, as well as successively transmitted Hadīths.

In this section, we will recount some statements made by prominent Shiite scholars refuting the claim that the Holy Qur'ān has been falsified. But before that, we will undertake to prove the principle of lack of falsification of the Holy Qur'ān:

The first rumors that the Holy Qur'ān has suffered falsification were devised by Christians and Jews. According to the incontrovertible testimony of history, with the passage of time, the divine books of these two religions have suffered massive falsifications as well as alterations, and thus have lost their original authority and value. It is for this reason that Christians and Jews strived

to devise and spread false rumors that the Holy Qur'ān had suffered the same fate too!

History categorically bears witness that time and time again the Torah was completely destroyed and it disappeared, especially after Nebuchadnezzar attacked and ransacked Bayt al-Maqdis[1], and only many years later, did Jewish religious authorities write it once more.

According to historical evidence, the four Gospels were also written many years after Christ ('a), by a number of people, and thus, there is not the least trace of the *Injīl*[2] which was revealed unto Jesus ('a).

People who have founded all their religious knowledge and basic beliefs on such books are only too willing to accuse the Holy Qur'ān of having suffered the same fate of distortion, despite that the method of compilation and protection of the Holy Qur'ān in all periods of Islāmic history is basically not comparable to the method of compilation and protection of the Torah and the Gospel in the history of Judaism and Christianity.

Authentic documented records bear witness to the fact that in none of the historical periods of Islām has the condition of the Holy Qur'ān suffered ambiguity and distortion. In this section, we have to pay heed to two points in which answers to a lot of questions are concealed:

1- The Holy Qur'ān is a book which gave rise to a revolution in all aspects of the social life of Muslims. It upturned and transformed their former lives and brought

1. That is, Jericho or Jerusalem.
2. That is, the Gospel or Evangel.

into being a new life based on faith and human principles. For this reason, the Holy Qur'ān has had very close connection with all fundamental facets of Islāmic life. Muslims have been deriving their political, economic and ethical rules, even their family etiquette and customs, from this heavenly and divine book. They recite parts of it five times on a daily basis in prayer, and always, first refer to it and then the Sunnah and traditions of the Noble Messenger (s) in all their daily activities.

In this case, how can a book which is so intertwined with the lives of Muslim people and is referred to and used so much, get distorted, without ordinary people or the elite becoming aware of this falsification?

The supposition that the Holy Qur'ān has been distorted without anyone becoming aware of it, is similar to assuming that the constitution of a great nation being changed without anyone knowing it. Is it possible for the contents of the constitution of a nation to suffer alteration without people being aware of it and not protesting against it? The role of the Holy Qur'ān in the social lives of Muslims is much higher than the role of constitutions in the lives of contemporary people. It is for this reason that Muslims were so attentive to it that, had the least falsification taken place, it would have been met with vehement reaction and protests from every corner of the Islāmic world.

2- The history of the compilation of the Holy Qur'ān during the era of the Noble Messenger (s) and the remarkable and special importance which he (s) and Muslims attached to the preservation and recording of the

Holy Qur'ān proves that there was not the least possibility of reducing even a word from it.

According to historical evidence, during the era of Allah's Messenger (s), there were a lot of learned Muslims, whose number has been reported to be forty three people,[1] who, by orders of the Noble Prophet (s), used to record every verse and/ or *sūrah*[2] as soon as it was sent down or revealed and these writings were preserved with utmost diligence and care by Muslims. 'Alī bin Abī Tālib ('a) and Zayd bin Thābit were the most famous and meticulous of all recorders of the Holy Qur'ān. The other copies of the Holy Qur'ān prevalent among Muslims were recorded from their copies and thus referred to in recitation and usage by all Muslims.

In addition to this, a great number of Muslims had memorized verses and *sūrahs* of the Holy Qur'ān. These people were very accurate in memorization of the Holy Qur'ān and never used to neglect even one word of this divine book. These people, called reciters of the Qur'ān,[3] were always consulted by people in matters of recitation of the Holy Qur'ān.

In addition to this, we ought to bear in mind that there are a lot of Qur'ānic verses which categorically state that this divine book is not susceptible to falsification, alteration

1. Tārikh al-Qur'ān of Zanjāni, chapter six, /20.
2. That is, chapter of the Holy Qur'ān.
3. That is, Qārī, in the singular, literary means reciter, or, chanter, or reader, and Qārīyān, its plural, means reciters, or chanters, or readers.

and distortion, such as:'*Indeed We have sent down the Reminder,*[1] *and indeed We will preserve it.*'[2]

1. That is, the Holy Qur'ān.
2. *Sūrah al-Hijr (Hijr):* 9.
Muslim scholars and intellectuals have also explicitly stated in their books of exegesis and theology, that there is a consensus among Muslim experts that the Holy Qur'ān has not been falsified. If perchance, a scholar is found who holds that the Holy Qur'ān has suffered alteration; it is because of a few Hadīths, which malevolent people have inserted in books of tradition.

2- Fātimah's Qur'ān

Question: It is said that Shi'ahs have a sacred book called *Mushaf Fātimah*, (Fātimah's Qur'ān). To what extent is this true?

Response: In the Holy Qur'ān, the term *suhuf* has been employed to mean a book or scripture:

Likewise, *mushaf* has been derived from the etymon *suhuf* to mean a book or hardback. During the early days of Islām, even after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s), *mushaf* was not applied to the Holy Qur'ān but to every covered or bound book.

In regard to the compilation of the Holy Qur'ān, Ibn Abī Dāwūd Sijistāni quotes from a book by Muhammad bin Sīrīn that when the Noble Messenger (s) departed this corporeal life, 'Alī bin Abī Tālib ('a) said, 'I have sworn never to leave my house, unless for the Friday prayers, until I have compiled a *mushaf* [1] of the Holy Qur'ān.'

Abū al-'Āliyah recounts, 'They compiled the Holy Qur'ān and bound it in a *mushaf* during the caliphate of Abū Bakr.'

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1. A covered and bound copy of the Holy Qur'ān.

He also says, ‘‘Umar bin Khatāb issued orders that the Holy Qur’ān must be compiled and he was the first person to bind it in a *mushaf*.’[1]

These sentences indicate that during those days, *mushaf* used to mean a big book and/ or hardback whose pages were protected from being scattered and dispersed. It was only later that it came to be exclusively applied to the Holy Qur’ān.

Coincidentally, Hadīths of our infallible Imāms (a) indicate that even during their eras, the term *mushaf* used to mean a book and /or written work.

Imām Sādiq (‘a) states, ‘Whoever recites the Holy Qur’ān bound in cover derives benefit for his eyes.’[2]

It has also been recorded in another Hadīth, ‘Reciting the Holy Qur’ān that has been bound in a cover reduces divine punishment from one’s father and mother.’[3]

It has so far become clear that up to the end of the first century, the term *mushaf* used to mean a covered book and/ or notebook in which enlightened and learned people used to record their knowledge. If later on they came to call the Holy Qur’ān *mushaf*, it was because it came out of people’s minds or memories and was written down on paper and bound in a cover.

Taking this into consideration, we ought not to be surprised that the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s) had a

1. Kitāb Masāhif of Hāfiz Abū Bakr ‘Abdullah bin Abī Dāwūd Sijistāni.
2. Usūl Kāfi, 2/613.
3. Ibid.

mushaf in which she used to write the knowledge and erudition which she had acquired from her eminent father and later left it as the best inheritance for her children.

Fortunately, Fātimah's (‘a) children know the reality and truth of this *mushaf* and have said that it contains nothing but a series of knowledge, which Fātimah learnt from her honorable father and/ or through other means.

We will now recount some of these Hadīths:

Hasan bin ‘Alī (‘a) said, ‘An encyclopedic book called *mushaf Fātimah (‘a),* in which has not been written the *halāl* and *harām*, is in our possession. There is no word from the Holy Qur'ān in it, except dictations of the Noble Messenger (s) and the writings of ‘Alī (‘a), all of which is with us.’[1]

Imām Hassan (‘a) expressly states that there is not a word concerning the *halāl* and *harām* in *mushaf Fātimah (‘a)* so that no one should imagine that legislative revelation used to be sent down to the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s).

In another Hadīth concerning the description of *mushaf Fātimah (‘a),* **Imām Sādiq (‘a),** ‘I swear upon Allah that there is not in it[2] a word from the Holy Qur'ān.' The transmitter of this Hadīth says, ‘I asked, "Is there knowledge in it?"' The Imām responded, ‘Yes, but not ordinary knowledge.’[3]

1. Basāir al-Darajāt, al-Saffār, /157-158.
2. That is, mushaf Fātimah (‘a).
3. Kāfi, Basāir al-Darajāt, Hadīth no. 1.

Taking what has been said into consideration, it becomes clear that *mushaf Fātimah (‘a)* has no connection with the Holy Qur’ān and people who have taken it as a pretext to say that the Holy Qur’ān has been distorted, are either malevolent or ignorant.

We will now explain the truth for the readers:

The Inspired Relater in Islām

One of the indisputable teachings or doctrines among Muslim scholars is the existence of inspired relaters (*muhaddath*) among Muslims. An inspired relater is not a prophet and no revelation is sent down to him, but nonetheless angels speak with him and he hears their words. The angels address him and that is why he is called *muhaddath* in the objective case. Bukhāri transmits that the Noble Prophet (s) said, ‘There were men among the Children of Israel to whom knowledge about the invisible world was imparted, despite the fact that they were not prophets. And if this kind of knowledge were imparted to man from my community, it would be ‘Umar bin Khatāb.’[1]

Sunni Hadīths and interpretations concerning the existence of inspired relaters (*muhaddath*) in the Islāmic community are so many that it is not possible to recount all of them here. Commentators of *Sahīh Bukhāri* have made sufficient explanations in this regard.[2]

1. Sahīh Bukhāri, 2/194/ bāb manāqib ‘Umar bin Khatāb.
2. Irshād al-Sāri bisharh Sahīh Bukhāri, 6/99.

In the book called *Kāfi*, Kulayni has a section in which he has related Hadīths asserting that the Imāms (ʻa) are inspired relaters (*muhaddathūn*). All these Hadīths denote that the term *muhaddath* is attributed to a person who hears the sound or words of an angel but does not see it. Then he states that all the Imāms (ʻa) of the Noble Prophet's household are inspired relaters (*muhaddathūn*).

Fātimah (ʻa) is an Inspired Relater

Fātimah (ʻa), the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s), is counted as one of the inspired relaters because of her existential perfection. That is to say, she used to hear the words of an angel but never used to see it. This took place after the sad demise of her honorable father, the Messenger of Allah (s), when sorrow and desolation had overwhelmed her. At this juncture, Allah ordered Archangel Gabriel, the Trustworthy, to descend upon her. He used to reveal to her events that would come to pass in the future and she would get consoled and comforted. We will now explain the qualities of *mushaf Fātimah (ʻa)* by quoting the words of her descendants (ʻa) in this regard:

Imām Sādiq (ʻa) states, ʻWhen Allah seized the soul of His Messenger (s), great sorrow overwhelmed Fātimah (ʻa). Allah sent an angel to express condolences to her. Fātimah (ʻa) told Amīr al-Mu'minīn ʻAlī (ʻa) about what she was hearing. ʻAlī (ʻa) said, "Inform me whenever you hear its voice so that I too may hear it." These statements were imparted to Fātimah (ʻa) by the angel and she used to place them in front of ʻAlī (ʻa). They were [later] compiled in a book whose name took

after hers, but there is nothing in it concerning the *halāl* and *harām*, except predictions about the future.'[1]

1. Kāfi, 1/ bāb fihi dhikr al-Sahīfah/ Hadīth no. 2.

3- ‘Alī’s Sacred Book

Question: Did Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a) have a separate and different sacred book or scripture?

Response: This question is put forward in two ways; sometimes they ask what is meant by the Holy Scripture of ‘Alī (*Mushaf ‘Alī*) and at times they ask what is meant by the Book of ‘Alī (*Kitāb ‘Alī*).

The sacred book of ‘Alī (‘a) is the Qur’ān which he compiled in the order of revelation. In the book entitled, *Fihrist*, Ibn Nadīm writes, ‘Amīr al-Mu’minīn Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a) felt that the sad departure of the Noble Prophet (s) was a bad omen for the people. He swore never to leave his house until he had compiled the Holy Qur’ān, which he did in three days and brought it to the Mosque.’[1]

Ya‘qūbi writes, ‘After the sad departure of the Noble Messenger (s), Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a) compiled the Holy Qur’ān and divided it into seven parts.’ Then he mentioned all the seven parts and *sūras* it contained.[2]

Upon contemplation on the contents of ‘Alī’s Holy Qur’ān which Ya‘qūbi has listed, it can be inferred that it did not have the least difference in the number of *sūras* with the

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1. Tārikh al- Qur’ān, /76, authored by Abū Abdullah Zanjāni (b. 1360) printed in Cairo, with an introduction by Ahmad Amīn Misri.
2. Tārikh Ya‘qūbi (Ibn Wāzih Akhbāri), 2/126.

Holy Qur'ān currently in circulation. If at all there is any difference, it is in the method or modality of compilation of the *sūras* of the Holy Qur'ān.

If such a sacred book truly exists, it does not have the least incongruity with preserving the Holy Qur'ān from falsification. It is not only Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a) who compiled the Holy Qur'ān in the order of his liking, Abdullah bin Abbās' copy also had the same difference [of method of modality].

Now is the opportune time to respond to the second question:

The book of ‘Alī (‘a) consists what ‘Amīr al-Mu'minīn Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a) wrote when the Noble Prophet (s) was still alive. ‘Alī (‘a) used to write all that he would hear from the Noble Prophet (s) regarding the *halāl* and *harām* as well as other issues. The collection of Hadīths dictated by the Noble Prophet (s) and written down by ‘Alī (‘a) came to be known as the Book of ‘Alī (‘a) and was passed hand to hand within the Noble Prophet's household and sometimes Imām Bāqir (‘a) and Imām Sādiq (‘a) used to refer to it when explaining Islāmic laws.

Najāshi, the Shiite scholar of transmitters and chains of transmission of Hadīth, narrates in his book entitled, *Rijāl al-Najāshi* (translated by Muhammad bin ‘Athāfir Sayrafi) that his father said, ‘Hakam bin ‘Utaybah and I were in the presence of Imām Bāqir (‘a). Hakam bin ‘Utaybah was continually asking Imām Bāqir (‘a) questions. Imām Bāqir (‘a) too kept responding. Then a disagreement arose between them concerning some issue. Imām Bāqir (‘a) told his son Imām Sādiq (‘a), ‘O my son, stand up and go and bring the Book of ‘Alī (‘a).' Imām Sādiq (‘a) rose up

and brought a big book in the form of a scroll from of inside the house. Imām Bāqir (‘a) looked for the point that he had in mind and told Hakam bin ‘Utaybah, ‘This is ‘Alī’s writing and the Noble Prophet’s dictation.’ Then he looked at him and said, ‘No matter where you go, you and your friend Salmah bin Kuhayl and your other friend Abū al-Miqdām will never find firmer knowledge than the knowledge of people upon whom the Archangel Gabriel used to descend.’[1]

It can be inferred from other Hadīths that the Book of ‘Alī (‘a) was a very voluminous scroll.

In addition to this book, ‘Amīr al-Mu’minīn Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a) has another collection of Hadīths called *Sahīfah ‘Alī (‘a)* in which he has gathered Islāmic laws concerning blood money. Many Hadīths have been recorded in other books of tradition.

The deceased erudite researcher Mirzā ‘Alī Miyānji has made diligent efforts to gather and compile all Hadīths, which have been quoted from *Sahīfah ‘Alī (‘a)* and recorded in other books of tradition, in one volume.[2]

We too have thoroughly discussed *Kitāb ‘Alī (‘a)* and *Mushaf ‘Alī (‘a)* in our *Tarīkh Fiqh al-Islāmi wa Adwarih*.[3]

In conclusion, we have to say that ‘Amīr al-Mu’minīn Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a), his pure descendants (‘a) and Shiites embarked on recording and preserving the Noble

1. Rijāl Najāshi, translation number 967.
2. Makātīb al-Rasūl, 1/66-71.
3. Tarīkh Fiqh al-Islāmi wa Adwarih, /118.

Prophet's Hadīths immediately after his sad demise and never paid any heed to the prohibition enforced by those with vested political interests, who were to meet with defeat a hundred years later. This subject calls for more discussion which lies beyond the limitations of these pages.

4- The Idea that Shiites attach more importance to Supplication (Du'a) than Recitation of the Holy Qur'ān

Question: Why do Shiites attach more importance to supplication than they attach to recitation of the Holy Qur'ān, and why are they more diligent in reading *du'a* than they are in reading the Book of Allah?

Response: There is nothing in the religious teachings which have come down to us that indicates that we ought to be more diligent in supplication (*du'a*) than in recitation of the Holy Qur'ān or attach more importance to reading *du'a* than reading the Book of Allah. The Holy Qur'ān is an eternal miracle and the last in the series of divine books. There are a lot of Hadīths which lay emphasis on recitation and preservation of the Holy Qur'ān, and lots of books have been written asserting that it has been stressed in prophetic traditions that Allah's Book has to be recited with a good voice.

In this regard, reference to the book entitled, *The Qur'ān in the Traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt*[1] will suffice. This book clarifies the greatness of this divine book and proves the importance attached to it by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

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1. Qur'ān dar riwāyāt Ahl al-Bayt ('a), printed in Iran and Egypt.

Presently, there has arisen a lot of interest in memorization of the Holy Qur'ān, even among pre-adolescents, in the Islāmic Republic of Iran, such that children as young as five years of age or even younger have memorized the whole Qur'ān and participate in international competitions and have won prizes. Besides the international competitions in which they participate outside the country, international competitions are also held in Iran at which international judges are invited. Winners in memorization, translation and exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān are encouraged to continue their diligent efforts in these fields through prizes.

Also, television stations, especially for the Holy Qur'ān, have been established, whose duty is to broadcast Qur'ānic programs round the clock.

People's special attention to supplications is directed to *Du'a Kumayl* and *Du'a Nudbah*, which are recited in a group on Thursday Nights and Friday mornings. It is this that has given rise to the illusion that Shiites attach more importance to supplication (*du'a*) than to the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān.

The Sunnis pay less attention to supplications because they do not have such articulate and expressive supplications among them. That is why it appears that Shiites attach more importance to supplication than to the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān.

Reciting *du'a* and entreaties is one of the highest levels of worship and devotion to Allah, as has been said,

‘Supplicating and entreating Allah is the heart of worship.’[1]

1. Safīnah al-Bahār, 1/ section of Du‘a.

Chapter Four:
The Shī‘ah View of Imamate

1- Imamate in the Holy Qur'ān

Question: If the office of the Imamate is one of the fundamental principles of religion, then why has the Holy Qur'ān not said anything in this regard?

Response: There is no disagreement or dispute regarding the fact that after the sad departure of the Noble Prophet (s), administration of the Islāmic community needs to be shouldered by a prominent person and the intellect of every impartial person discerns this basic principle. Fortunately, contrary to the opinion of the asker of the above question, the Holy Qur'ān has explained the office of the Imamate in a general manner. The following verses explain the Imamate:

1- The Verse of Guardianship

'*Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakāt while bowing down*.'[1]

Most exegetes and scholars of Hadīth recount the cause of revelation of this verse, thus: beggar entered the Mosque and asked for help. No one gave him anything. Imām 'Alī ('a), who was in a state of bowing down (*rukū'*) during the ritual prayer, extended his hand to the poor man and indicated to him to remove and take the ring which was on his the finger so that he could use it to

1. *Sūrat al-Māi'dah (The Table):* 55.

alleviate his needs. The beggar came forward, removed the ring from Imām ‘Alī’ s (‘a) finger and left the Mosque to go and solve his problems.’

Soon news of this incident reached the Noble Messenger (s). He thus asked Allah, ‘O my Lord! Appoint a vizier and successor for me in the same way that you appointed a minister and successor for Moses (‘a).’ At this very moment, the angel of Revelation descended and recited the above quoted verse for the Noble Prophet (s).

In addition to Shiite scholars, this reason of revelation has been recorded with the least differences by sixty six prominent Sunni scholars of Hadīth and theologians, in their books. The erudite researcher ‘Allāmah Amīnī has recorded its sources in his noble book entitled *al-Ghadīr.*[1]

We now have to find out how this verse denotes and explains the issue of the Imamate:

Walī in the above quoted verse denotes a guardian and a person who takes the reins of power. That is why a father and a ruler are called guardians (*walī*), and they say that the father is the guardian (*walī*) of his child and that the ruler is the guardian (*walī*) of society. Naturally, the above quoted verse denotes Allah, the Apostle and lastly the Imām,[2] because the discussion pivots on ‘the guardian of the believers’. Even the context of the verse and clues found in the reason of revelation are the clearest evidence that *walī* means the Imamate and the guardianship [of the Imāms (‘a)].

1. Al-Ghadīr, 3/157-162.
2. That is, and the faithful who maintain the prayer.

1- If *walī* in the above quoted verse meant other than religious guardianship, rule and authority, for instance if it meant lover (*muhibb*) and helper (*nāsir*), limiting it to Allah, the Apostle and 'the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the *zakāt* while bowing down' would be meaningless because all people with faith are lovers and helpers of one another, and this does not exclusively pertain to the three individuals mentioned in the above quoted verse.

2- The outward meaning of the verse denotes that only Allah, the Apostle and 'the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the *zakāt* while bowing down' are guardians of the Islāmic community. In this case, the group that has guardianship is distinct from those people who are under guardianship. If *walī* means leader and guardian of the affairs of Muslims, the leader and the followers will naturally be separated and differentiated from one another. But if we take it to mean a friend and helper, these two groups will fall into one category because all people are one another's lovers and friends, as well as helpers and assistants.

3- If *walī* meant loving and helping, '*and the faithful*' would have sufficed to illustrate the point and there was no need to add the sentence '*who maintain the prayer and give the zakāt while bowing down*' because in a society that has faith, all people are one another's friends and helpers, whether they help one another while bowing down or not.

It is for the reason that the verse means what the Noble Prophet (s) said elsewhere:

'O 'Alī ('a)! After my departure, you are the guardian (*walī*) of every man with faith.'[1]

The phrase 'after my departure' is a clue that *walī* means leadership and guardianship (*wilāyah*) in religious and worldly affairs, not love and friendship, because if it meant friendship, it would not be confined to the time after the departure of the Noble Prophet (s).

2- The Verse of 'Those Vested with Authority'

The previous verse is not the only one which propounds the office of the Imamate and guardianship (*wilāyah*) as a fundamental tenet of religion, but the verse which orders the faithful to obey those vested with authority, also put this basic principle forward:

'*O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more favorable in outcome.*'[2]

In the above quoted verse, 'those vested with authority', which denotes leaders, indicates the leadership of a group of people whose obeying is adjoined to obeying Allah and the Noble Messenger (s). Fakhr Rāzi, in his exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān, eloquently says, 'Adjoining "those vested with authority" with Allah and the Noble Messenger (s) with the adjunct '*and*' indicates that the holders of this position are infallible and purified from sin, because besides being adjoined to two infallible beings

1. Mustadrak Hākim, 3/111; Musnad Ahmad, 4/437.
2. *Sūrat al-Nisā' (Women):* 59.

(Allah and the Noble Prophet (s)) and besides that "those vested with authority" has to be similar to those two, it has to be inferred that these leaders are infallible and purified from sin and error because obeying "those vested with authority" has no restriction and necessary condition. And if it were other than that, obeying them would definitely have been restricted to certain conditions and limitations, whereas the Holy Qur'ān has not enumerated any conditions and limitations.[1]

These two Qur'ānic verses (the verse of guardianship (*wilāyah*) and the verse of "those vested with authority") independently explain the office of the Imamate, whereas the other verses do not explain the office of the Imamate but their reason of revelation indicate that they were revealed in regard to the Imamate, like "the verse of perfection".

3- The Verse of Perfection of Religion

'*Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion*."[2]

Exegetes and some scholars of Hadīth have said that this verse was revealed during the last pilgrimage of the Noble

1. Tafsīr Rāzī, 10/ 144.
2. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 3.

Prophet (s) on the day of Ghadīr Khum, the day when ʻAlī (ʻa) was appointed to the office of the Imamate.[1]

It can be inferred from the three verses quoted above that the office of the Imamate and guardianship (*wilāyah*) have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān, and that the Holy Qur'ān has not kept quiet about these two issues.

1. Al-Durr al-Manthūr, 2/298; Fath al-Qadīr, 2/57; Yanābīʻ al-Mawadah, /120; Tafsīr al-Minār, 6/463; Al-Ghadīr of Allāmah Amīnī, 1/447-458.

2- The names of the Imāms (‘a) in the Holy Qur’ān

Question: Why are the names of the twelve Imāms (‘a) not explicitly mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān?

Response: The instructional method of the Holy Qur’ān consists in mentioning generalities and universal principles. Their application is shouldered by the Noble Prophet (s). The Messenger of Allah (s) was not only charged with reciting the Holy Qur’ān, but also explicating it:

‘*We sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify for the people that which has been sent down to them, so that they may reflect.*’[1]

It can be inferred upon meditation on the above quoted verse that in addition to reciting the Holy Qur’ān, the Noble Messenger (‘a) was also charged with clarifying Qur’ānic truths. Therefore, expecting the Holy Qur’ān to mention all instances of application and particulars is similar to expecting the constitution of a country to mention all particulars of the law. Now we will mention some Qur’ānic methods of introducing people:

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1. *Sūrat al-Nahl (The Bee):* 44.

1- Introducing by Name

Sometimes conditions necessitate that an individual be introduced by name, such as:

'*And to give the good news of an apostle who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad*.'[1]

In the above quoted verse, Jesus Christ ('a) introduced the apostle who would come after him by name.

2- Introduction by Number

And sometimes the situation calls for introducing individuals by number, such as:

'*Certainly Allah took a pledge from the Children of Israel,*

And We raised among them twelve chiefs.'[2]

3- Introduction by Attribute

Sometimes the situation is such that an individual ought to be introduced by attributes, as the Torah and the *Injīl*[3] have introduced the Seal of the Prophets ('a) by attributes:

'*Those who follow the Apostle, the uninstructed prophet, whose mention they find written with them in the Torah and the Evangel, who bids them to do what is right and bids them from what is wrong, makes lawful to them all the good things and forbids them from all vicious things, and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them -those who believe in him, honor him, and*

1. *Sūrat al-Saff (The Ranks):* 6.
2. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 12.
3. That is, the Evangel, or the Gospel.

help him and follow the light that has been sent down with him, they are the felicitous.’[1]

Taking this method into consideration, expecting the names of the twelve Imāms (‘a) to be mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān is not right, because the Holy Qur’ān sometimes introduces people by name, and at times by number, and on other occasions by attributes.

If we accept the principle that Allah has to mention [the solutions to] all disputable issues in order for Muslims not to suffer schisms, then hundreds of theological, ideological, juristic and legislative issues have to be mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān, issues which for centuries have caused disputes, war and bloodshed among Muslims. However, it has not spoken an explicit and categorical word to solve these controversies. Such [contentions] as:

1- Are Allah’s attributes exactly the same as His essence or additional to His essence?

2- What is the reality of declarative attributes such as ‘sitting or settling on the Throne’?

3- Is the Word of Allah pre-eternal or temporally originated?

4- Pre-destination and free will.

Despite that these and other issues of the same nature can be inferred from the Holy Qur’ān, but still it has not explained them in such a clear and categorical manner as to decisively resolve these disputes. The wisdom in this is to encourage people to meditate and delve deeper into the

1. *Sūrat al-A‘rāf (The Elevations):* 157.

meanings of Qur'ānic verses. Categorically explaining these issues is contrary to this [wise] principle.

Introduction by Name does not remove Differences

The one who asks why the names of the twelve Imāms (ʻa) are not explicitly mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān, imagines that differences would have been resolved had the name and /or names of the Imāms (ʻa) been mentioned in the Book of Allah. This principle lacks generality, because there has been an instance where the name of a leader was categorically mentioned but still differences arose.

The Children of Israel asked their prophet to request Allah to appoint for them a leader who would lead them in the *jihād* to recapture lands that had been usurped from them and free their men who had been taken as war captives. Thus relates the Holy Qur'ān:

ʻ*Have you not regarded the elite of the Israelites after Moses, when they said to their prophet, "Appoint for us a king, that we may fight in the way of Allah." He said, "May it not be that you will not fight if fighting were prescribed for you?" They said, "Why should we not fight in the way of Allah, when we have been expelled from our homes and [separated from] our children?" So when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned back except a few of them, and Allah knows best the wrongdoers.*'[1]

On Allah's orders, their prophet introduced a leader by name:

1. *Sūrat al-Baqarah (The Heifer):* 246.

‘*Their prophet said to them, “Allah has appointed Saul as king for you.” They said, “How can he have kingship over us, when we have a greater right to kingship than him, as he has not been given ample wealth?” He said, “Indeed Allah has chosen him over you, and enhanced him vastly in knowledge and physique, and Allah gives His kingdom to whomever He wishes, and Allah is all-bounteous, all-knowing*.”[1]

They did not submit to their leader despite that he had expressly been named, and they began finding fault, saying, ‘How can he have kingship over us, when we have a greater right to kingship than him, as he has not been given ample wealth?’

This indicates that mentioning the name of the leader does not suffice to remove differences, but that the community has to be prepared to accept the leader.

It is likely that mentioning the names of the twelve Imāms (‘a) would have incited those intent on usurping leadership and power to engage in genocide in order to prevent the birth of these Imāms (‘a), as happened with respect to Moses (‘a); a thousand newborns were beheaded in the vain hope that he would be killed before he grew.

There was a lot of sensitivity in regard to the birth of his holiness, Imām Mahdī, may Allah hasten his reappearance, because his parentage and family linage had been known. The house of his father, Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) was always kept under surveillance and

1. *Sūrat al-Baqarah (The Heifer):* 247.

scrutiny so that any son who would be born from him should be quickly killed before he grew.

Finally, we have to say that the Holy Qur'ān is like a constitution; expecting everything and all particulars to be mentioned therein is completely needless. Ritual prayers, fasting and *zakāt*, which are among the loftiest Islāmic duties, have been mentioned in general in the Holy Qur'ān and all their particulars have been derived from the Noble Prophet's (s) traditions.

3- The Time of the Appearance of Belief in Twelve Imāms (‘a)

Question: Did belief in twelve Imāms (‘a) exist during the era of the Noble Prophet (s) or did it emerge after the demise of Imām Hassan ‘Askari (‘a)?

Response: Belief in twelve Imāms (‘a) from [the tribe of] Quraysh, or Bani Hāshim, was prevalent during the era of the Noble Prophet (s), but acquaintance with their names and identities took place gradually, because every Imām used to specify and introduce the next guardian and Imām after him. Categorical proofs indicate that the Prophet of Islām (s) announced the Imamate and leadership of ‘Alī (‘a) on various occasions, especially the day of Ghadīr Khum, and Shiism emerged as a belief in the leadership of ‘Alī (‘a). Likewise, the Messenger of Allah announced the Imamate and leadership of his two beloved grandchildren, Hassan (‘a) and Husayn (‘a), during the era of his prophetic mission. He said:

‘Hassan and Husayn are both leaders of the Islāmic community, whether they take the reins of power or live in reclusion.’[1]

After the martyrdom of Husayn bin ‘Alī (‘a), and the infamy of the caliphate of the Umayyads, the Islāmic community focused its attention on his son Imām

1. Al-Risālah fi Nasīhah al-‘Āmmah of Abū As‘ad, al-Muhsin bin Karāmah Bayhaghi, /18 and 68; Ihqāq al-Haqq, 26/48.

Sajjād (‘a). After him they looked towards Imām Bāqir (‘a), and after him towards Imām Sādiq (‘a), the reviver of the Sunnah of the Noble Messenger (s) and leader of scholars of Hadīth and jurists. Thus every Imām used to fulfill his duties in his era in the best manner possible, despite the hardships and suppressions they suffered. Shiites too, had firm faith in their Imamate.

The conjecture that belief in the Imamate of the twelve Imāms (‘a) emerged during the time of Imām Hassan ‘Askari (‘a) derives from ignorance with respect to the history of Shiism. We have thoroughly discussed this in the first chapter. Those interested in more information regarding this issue should refer to the first chapter.

4- The Executorship of Imām ‘Alī (‘a)

Question: Why do the Shiites believe that ‘Alī (‘a) is the executor of the Noble Prophet’s will?

Response: Imām ‘Alī (‘a) was the Noble Prophet’s (s) executor in two stages:

1- *The stage of mobilization:* During the last days of his life when he was in his sickbed, the Noble Messenger (‘a) recommended that ‘Alī (‘a) should take charge of his funeral ablution, shrouding and burial rites, and to pay his debts. Thereupon, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) did not perform any other duties until he had discharged these orders.

No one has refuted this denotation of executorship, and there is consensus among everyone about it.

2- *The Noble Prophet’s (s) appointing him as his replacement:* The Noble Prophet (s) had appointed Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) to be his caliph and replacement in matters related to the leadership and guardianship of the Islāmic community. If we look at this matter fairly, impartially, and without prejudice, we will see that ‘Alī’s (‘a) caliphate and succession to the Noble Prophet (s) was a clear and apparent matter during that same era. The term *wasī*[1] was considered as one of Imām ‘Alī’s (‘a)

1. That is, executor, and in this case it means executor of the Noble Prophet’s will.

titles, [or cognomens] and appears a lot in the poetry and prose of those days.

Exegetes of the Holy Qur'ān and scholars of Hadīth narrate: 'When the verse'*Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk'*[1], was revealed to the Noble Prophet (s), ordering him to invite the nearest of his kinsfolk to the religion of Islām, the Messenger of Allah (s) invited the elders of Bani Hāshim and explained his creed to them. He then said, 'O children of 'Abd al-Muttalib! I have brought for you the good of this world and the hereafter, and my Lord has ordered me to invite you towards it. Who among you will help and support me so that he may become the executor of my will and my successor among you?' No one among them responded to the Noble Prophet (s) except 'Alī ('a), who was the youngest among them. Then the Noble Messenger (s) said, 'He is my brother, the executor of my will and my successor among you. Listen to what he says and obey him.'

This Hadīth is well known as 'Hadīth Yawm al-Dār' and a lot of scholars of Hadīth and biographers have recounted it.[2] Proofs which denote the executorship of Imām 'Alī ('a) are not limited to what has been said, but also *Hadīth Thaqalayn*, *Hadīth Safīnah* and *Hadīth Ghadīr* all indicate his executorship.

In one of his sayings regarding the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) of the Noble Prophet (s), Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) says, 'In

1. *Sūrat al-Shu'arā':* 214.
2. Tārikh Tabari, 2/319-321, printed by Dār al-Ma'ārif of Cairo; Tārikh Kāmil bin Athīr, 12/62-63; Muntakhab Kanz al-'Ummal on the margins of Musnad Ahmad, 5/41-42.

their favor exists the will and succession (of the Prophet).’[1]

The Executorship of Imām ‘Alī (‘a) in the Poetry of Poets who lived during the Era of the Noble Prophet (s)

Imām ‘Alī’s executorship of the Noble Prophet’s will during and after the era of the Noble Prophet (s) was so well known that poets of the first century used to employ the term *wasī* as one of the titles of Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) in their poems. We will now adduce examples in this regard:

1- ‘Abdullah bin Abī Sufyān

Chosen as the executor (wasī) of the Noble Prophet’s will,
His cousin, a man without equal.

2- ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ju‘ayl

‘Alī is the executor (wasī) of Mustafa the Apostle, his cousin.
The first person to perform the ritual prayers,
And foremost in piety and asceticism.

3- Ibn al-Tīhān, one of the Participants in the Battle Badr

He is our wasī, Imām and leader, He made what was hidden, apparent, And made known, what was secret.

In this regard, Ibn Abī al-Hadīd has recounted a lot of poems, in which poets during and after the era of the

1. Nahj al-Balāgha, sermon no. 2.

Noble Prophet (s), have called Imām ‘Alī (‘a) the executor of the Noble Prophet’s will.

The only thing that can possibly be said is that some people used to ask ‘Āishah about Imām ‘Alī’s (‘a) executorship of the Noble Prophet’s will. She would respond that the Noble Prophet (s) passed away in her house and that he did not make anyone the executor of his will.[1]

Repeated references to ‘Āishah indicate the publicity of this matter in that era but the demonstration is completely baseless, because assuming that the Noble Prophet (s) passed away beside ‘Āishah in her house and that he did not appoint anyone as the executor of his will, still this does not negate Imām ‘Alī’s executorship. It is very likely that the Noble Prophet (s) had appointed Imām ‘Alī (‘a) to be the executor of his will while he was in good health or at the beginning of his illness or while he was in the houses of his other wives. Appointing Imām ‘Alī (‘a) to be the executor of his will does not call for the Noble Prophet (s) to be in ‘Āishah’s house and close to passing away!

Is it imaginable that the Noble Prophet (s) would say that it is not right for a Muslim to sleep for two days without appointing an executor of his will in matters that are important[2], and yet he himself not practice what he preaches??!!

1. Sahīh Bukhāri, 1/ Kitāb Wisāyā/ Hadīth 2738.
2. Ibid, 2738.

5- Who are the People 'vested with Authority'

Question: Why is the phrase 'those vested with authority' interpreted as referring to certain special people?

Response: There are two opinions regarding who 'those vested with authority' are:

1- That it means the commanders of the Islāmic army.

2- That it means Muslim scholars and intellectuals.

Because of the outward aspect of the word *al-amr* (authority), some people have inclined towards the first interpretation and have said that 'those vested with authority' means generals and commanders of the Muslim army, despite that this exegesis is wrong on two grounds:

1- Firstly, there is a possibility that the word *al-amr* means status and position, in which case it will be compatible with the first exegesis.

2- Secondly, the verse under discussion is a forerunner of the ensuing verse, whose interpretation and reason of revelation we will later explain, and thus it will become clear that it is compatible with the second, not the first, exegesis of the word *al-amr*.

Regarding the reason of revelation of this verse, exegetes say, 'A man feigning to be a Muslim had a quarrel with a Jew over some issue. The Jew said, 'Let us refer this issue to Muhammad (s) [so that he may arbitrate between us].'

The Jew said this because he knew very well that the Noble Prophet (s) would arbitrate equitably for the reason that he never took any bribes, but the hypocrite feigning to be a Muslim suggested a Jew by the name of Ka'b bin Ashraf to be the arbiter because he knew that Ka'b bin Ashraf was a corrupt man who took bribes and thus would judge in his favor if he bribed him.[1]

It was for this reason that the verse of 'those vested with authority' was revealed:

'*O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you. And if you dispute concerning anything, Refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more favorable in outcome. Have you not regarded those who claim that they believe in what has been sent down to you, and what was sent down before you? They desire to seek the judgment of the Rebel, though they were commanded to defy it, and Satan desires to lead them astray into far error. And when they are told, "Come to what Allah has sent down and [come] to the Apostle," you see the hypocrites keep away from you aversely.*'[2]

Considering what has been said, the second opinion can be established as true because judicial matters have to be referred to religious scholars, not army commanders. But the question is that does 'those vested with authority' mean all the scholars of religion or a certain special group of infallible people who are immune from any kind of sin

1. Majma' al-Bayān, 2/264.
2. *Sūrat al-Nisā' (Women):* 59-61.

and error? The response to this question can be deduced from the verse itself.

1- The phrase 'those vested with authority' has been connected to the phrase 'the Apostle' through the conjunction 'and', and they share one verb (obey), indicating that, 'those vested with authority' are almost like the Noble Prophet (s) in arbitrating and passing judgment; that is to say, in the same way that the Noble Prophet (s) does not err and make mistakes in arbitration and judgment, 'those vested with authority' are also like him in this respect. In this case, 'those vested with authority' have to be scholars who are infallible and immune from sin and error.

2- The verse under discussion has not attached any binding restrictions and conditions to obeying 'those vested with authority'. It has not said that obey those vested with authority on the condition that they do not order you to sin and do something contrary to divine law, or on the condition that they do not err and sin. It can be inferred from this unrestricted and unconditioned binding [or obligation] that their judgment and arbitration is never contrary to divine law and they never err or sin. This calls for infallibility, and thus it can be deduced that this group of people are immune from sin and error.

Allah has restricted obeying parents:

'*We have enjoined man to be good to his parents. But if they urge you to ascribe to Me as partner that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them. To Me*

will be your return, whereat I will inform you concerning that which you used to do.'[1]

In this verse, obeying parents is not unconditioned and unrestricted, whereas obeying those vested with authority in the verse under discussion is completely unconditioned and has no restrictions whatsoever.

On the other hand, we know that obeying a human being in a matter which is contrary to divine law is *harām* (forbidden).

The Noble Prophet (s) says, 'Do not obey any human being in sinning against the Creator.'[2]

Fortunately, the purport of this verse has also been mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān:

'*When they commit an indecency, they say, "We found our fathers practicing it, and Allah has enjoined it upon us." Say, "Indeed Allah does not enjoin indecencies. Do you attribute to Allah what you do not know?*"'[3]

1- In the above quoted verse, unconditional and unrestricted obedience to those vested with authority has been considered as wājib.

2- Obeying anyone who orders you to do something contrary to divine law is *harām* (forbidden).

We can conclude that the people whom the Holy Qur'ān has called 'those vested with authority' are infallible and

1. *Sūrat al-'Ankabūt (The Spider):* 8.
2. Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, 8/ bāb 59, abwāb wujūb al-Hajj/ Hadīth no. 7.
3. *Sūrat al-A'rāf (The Elevations):* 28.

never call on people to do anything contrary to divine law, and that they do not err or sin in their deeds. These people can be no other than the twelve Imāms (ʿa), because there is consensus of opinion among Muslims that no one except these people is infallible and immune from sin.

In addition to the meaning of the verse, there are more than thirty traditions in books of Hadīth asserting that 'those vested with authority' refers to the infallible Imāms (ʿa).[1]

1. Tafsīr Burhān, 1/381-382.

6- The myth of 'khana al-amīn'

Question: Is it true that Shiites say '*khana al-amīn*'[1] three times after finishing the ritual prayers?

Response: This question indicates some kind of defamation and lies leveled against Shiites. The one who ascribes this to Shiites and corrupts people's minds is not [even] aware of the roots of this defamation.

The truth is that Jews used to believe that prophethood must and would always run in the household of Jacob ('a) and would never be entrusted to anyone outside this family. But when the Noble Prophet (s) appeared with categorical proof, they schemed to accuse the Archangel Gabriel of treachery. They said, 'Gabriel is a traitor! Gabriel is a traitor! Gabriel is a traitor!' That is to say, he committed treachery in regard to divine revelation; instead of continuing the prophethood in the household of Jacob ('a), he transferred it to the children of Ishmael ('a). It is for this reason that the Jews tenaciously hate Gabriel the trustworthy (*al-amīn*).

In his book of exegesis, Fakhr Rāzī writes, 'The Jewish community call Gabriel 'the angel of torture', and say, 'Allah had ordered him to preserve the prophethood in the household of the Children of Israel but he transferred it to

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1. That is, the Archangel Gabriel is a traitor. Al-amīn is one Gabriel's titles.

the Children of Ishmael ('a).[1] They pretended to love Michael. Thus the Holy Qur'ān criticizes their belief:

'*Say, "Whoever is an enemy of Gabriel [should know that] It is he who has brought down on your heart With the will of Allah, Confirming what has been [revealed] before it, and as a guidance and good news to the faithful. [Say,] "Whoever is an enemy of Allah, His angels and His apostles, And Gabriel and Michael, [let him know that] Allah is indeed the enemy of the faithless.*'[2]

Now look how some impious people who are against Islāmic unity attribute to the Shiites an issue which the Jews used to employ against Muslims. These impious and uninformed people say that Shiites believe that Gabriel committed treachery and instead of appointing 'Alī ('a) to the prophethood, he appointed Muhammad (s)!

There are millions of Shiites in the world who perform ritual prayers [on a daily basis] and not even one of them utters this statement after prayer. Instead, they loudly say 'Allahu Akbar'[3]. Most Shiites do not even know that such accusations are leveled against them.

1. Tafsīr Kabīr Fakhr Rāzī, 3/195, dār ahyā al-tarāth al-'arabi, Beirut.
2. *Sūrat al-Baqarah (The Heifer):* 97-98.
3. God is Great.

7- The Infallibility of Shiite Imāms (‘a)

Question: What proof is there for the infallibility of Shiite Imāms (‘a)?

Response: In whatever way we interpret the term infallibility, it is in essence a prerogative of Allah. It is He who, under the auspices of his encompassing knowledge, is immune from sin and error. His wisdom constrains Him from committing indecent deeds.

This point does not exclusively pertain to infallibility, but also to other attributes of this kind. He is in essence the Knower, the Omnipotent and the Living, and the knowledge, power and life of other existents belongs to Him. In other words, He is the Absolute Self-sufficient and, except Him, all are poor in Essence. In this regard, the Holy Qur’ān states:

‘*O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allah, and Allah- He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable. If He wishes, He will take you away, And bring about a new creation; and that is not a hard thing for Allah.*’[1]

It is this very essential Self-sufficiency of Allah which makes other possible [or contingent] existents derive benefit from Him and thus become alive, knowledgeable and able.

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1. *Sūrat Fātir (The Originator):* 15-17.

The issue of infallibility also belongs to this category; for the common good of mankind, Allah gives some people, who are mankind’s instructors and guides, the power to refrain from sin and remain immune from error in spite of having the ability to commit it.

It is very likely that this power, which is called the Holy Spirit, is imbued in their inner soul, or it is outside them in the form of an angel which prevents them from committing sin. On this basis, there is no hindrance for prophets (‘a) to remain immune from sin and error despite that infallibility is essentially an exclusive prerogative of Allah. All world Muslims believe that the Noble Prophet (s) is infallible from both sin and error, and proofs demonstrating the infallibility of the Noble Prophet (s) have been adduced in books of Muslim theologians belonging to such sects as the Imamate Shiites, the Ash‘arites and the Mu‘tazilites.

The infallibility of the twelve Imāms (‘a) is indisputable in the transmitted Hadīth:

1- According to the decree of Hadīth Thaqalayn, they are equal to and on par with the Holy Qur’ān, and equality necessitates being the same and identical. It can be inferred that in the same way that the Holy Qur’ān speaks the truth and in the same way that not even a bit of truth is hidden from it, those who are equal and the same with it are also likewise, because otherwise they would not equal to the Holy Qur’ān.

In other words, both the Holy Qur’ān and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have to be immune from deviation and error because the Noble Prophet (s) says that they will both be means of guidance up to the day of resurrection when they will

meet him at Kawthar, the fountain of abundance. It is not possible for people who are a means of guidance for mankind to perpetrate sin and error.

2- In regard to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), the Verse of Purification (*ayat al-Tathīr*) says that Allah’s existential and final will is incumbent upon purifying them from every kind of impurity.

It has been said in the previous discussions that the will of purifying and refining the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) can be interpreted in two ways:

1- Legislative and legal will, in the sense that Allah wants them to legally keep away from impurities.

2- Existential will, in the sense that purity and cleanness are mixed with their existence and infused in their hearts and souls.

The first meaning of Allah’s will does not exclusively pertain to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), but applies to all human beings, because Allah would like to guide all people to the straight path by way of legislating, and not to be deviated from it, whereas this verse specifically addresses the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) of the Noble Prophet (s):

‘*Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you,*

O People of the Household,

and purify you with a thorough purification.’[1]

Naturally, this is a special or particular will, because in other than this case, it will be a comprehensive will incumbent upon all human beings. For this reason, we

1. *Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates):* 33.

have to say that what is meant is existential and creational will in which pure factors have been fixed, but nevertheless has not divested them of the power to perform sin.

To explain the meaning of infallibility, and that it divests man of the power to commit sin, the late Shaykh Mufīd has given the example of a man who is in a state of drowning and to whom a rope is thrown; he is at liberty to either take hold of it or to leave it, but a rational man catches hold of it and thus saves his life.

There are many proofs for the infallibility of the twelve Imāms (‘a), but we will not adduce them here for purposes of brevity.

8- The Imāms (‘a) and Knowledge of the Unseen

Question: Knowledge of the Unseen or hidden things belongs to Allah. Would you please elaborate on how prophets (‘a) and Imāms (‘a) know about hidden things?

Response: This question can be inferred from the previous response too, because knowledge about the unseen or hidden things has two denotations:

1- Essential Knowledge of the Unseen or Hidden Things.

This is knowledge which emanates from the inner being of an existent. It is not acquired [knowledge] and it has no limitations. This kind of knowledge of the unseen or hidden things only belongs to Allah and no created being is the same with Him in this kind of knowledge, because besides Allah whatever is in this world is essentially poor and acquires knowledge and ability from Allah. In this section, there is no difference between knowledge about the physical and non-physical phenomena. Man opens his eyes and ears by the will of Allah and thus perceives physical objects or hears sounds.

It is possible as well as feasible for divine will to make a spiritually lofty man aware of hidden things in particular instances whenever it deems that this is advisable and incumbent. Ordinary human beings have varying apertures to the invisible world, what is more with lofty people such as prophets (‘a) and Allah’s saints (‘a).

In this discourse, we will adduce verses of the Holy Qur’ān which clearly and indisputably indicate that prophets (‘a) have knowledge about hidden affairs. Every Muslim who holds that the Holy Qur’ān is divine revelation can not refute that prophets (‘a) are endowed with such a virtue, and can not interpret these verses esoterically without any cause and reason.

Qur’ānic verses in this regard are of two kinds:

The first kind consists of verses which generally affirm that prophets (‘a) have knowledge of hidden things, and declare that Allah makes His prophets (‘a) aware of hidden affairs.

The second kind consists of verses which categorically attest that prophets (‘a) informed people about hidden affairs in particular instances.

Verses of the First Kind

1- ‘*Allah will not leave the faithful in your present state, until He has separated the bad ones from the good. Allah will not acquaint you with the Unseen, but Allah chooses from His apostles whomever He wishes. So have faith in Allah and His apostles; and if you are faithful and Godwary, there shall be a great reward for you.*’[1]

This verse means that Allah will never permit the good and faithful to remain undistinguished from the bad and hypocritical, and He will do two things in order to fulfill this objective:

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1. *Sūrat Āl-‘Imrān (Family of Imran):* 179.

A- He will distinguish true believers from hypocrites through tests and trials:

'*Allah will not leave the faithful in your present state, until He has separated the bad ones from the good*.'

B- He grants knowledge of hidden things to some of His prophets (s) so that they may thus be able to distinguish true believers from hypocrites:

'*Allah will not acquaint you with the Unseen, but Allah chooses from His apostles whomever He wishes.*'

This verse indicates that Allah chooses who of His prophets ('a) to acquaint with the Unseen, and this is by itself a proof that [some] prophets ('a) have knowledge of the unseen or hidden things.

If we delve deeper into the meaning of the above quoted verse, we will find out that this virtue is not granted to all prophets ('a), but to a chosen group from among them.

2- '*Knower of the Unseen, He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone, except to an apostle He approves of. Then He dispatches a sentinel before and behind him so that He may ascertain that they have communicated the messages of their Lord, and He comprehends all that is with them, and He keeps count of all things.*'[1]

The meaning of this verse is clear, and asserts that knowledge of the Unseen is a prerogative of Allah, and declares that He does not disclose the Unseen to anyone, except to an apostle He approves of.

1. *Sūrat al-Jinn (The Jinn):* 26-28.

It is now about time to adduce some Qur’ānic verses which bespeak that certain prophets (‘a) informed their people about the Unseen.

Instances when Prophets (‘a) informed People about the Unseen

After examining some Qur’ānic verses which assert some prophets (‘a) had knowledge of the Unseen, it can be inferred that Allah’s apostles (‘a) used to inform their people about the Unseen whenever common good or public interest necessitated it. We will now quote some of these verses:

1- Noah and knowledge of the Unseen

‘*And Noah said, “My Lord! Do not leave on the earth any inhabitant from among the faithless. If you leave them, they will lead astray Your servants and will not beget except vicious ingrates.*

My Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and the faithful men and women, and do not increase the wrongdoers in anything except ruin.’[1]

In this verse, the eminent prophet Noah (‘a) has informed his people about two issues that are completely hidden and concealed:

i) that from then onwards, no one would believe in him.

ii) that they will not beget except vicious ingrates.

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1. *Sūrat Nūh (Noah):* 26-27.

2- Jacob (‘a), Joseph (‘a) and the Unseen

Sūrah Yūsuf is overfilled with descriptions of Jacob (‘a) and his beloved son Joseph’s (‘a) knowledge of the Unseen, and a fleeting look at this sūrah is enough to demonstrate their knowledge of the Unseen. We will hereunder adduce two instances to illustrate this:

In his last meeting with his brothers, Joseph (‘a) revealed his identity to them and gave them his shirt so that they may take it to their father. As soon as they left Egypt, Jacob (‘a) instantly said:

‘*I sense the scent of Joseph, if you will not consider me a dotard.*’[1]

Jacob (‘a) sensed the scent of Joseph (‘a) from a long distance and gives glad tidings of getting united with his beloved son in Egypt.

Likewise Joseph (‘a), when imprisoned in Egypt, made the acquaintance of two youths who were polytheists. They narrated their dreams to him. After inviting them to monotheism, Joseph (‘a) correctly interpreted their dreams and unveiled the Unseen to them:

‘*O my prison mates! As for one of you, he will serve wine to his master, and as for the other, he will be crucified, and vultures will eat from his head. The matter about which you inquire has been decided.*’[2]

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1. *Sūrat Yūsuf (Joseph):* 95.
2. *Sūrat Yūsuf (Joseph):* 41.

These are not the only divine prophets (‘a) who, by Allah’s will, unveiled the Unseen. Consider the following story:

‘*When Moses said to his lad, “I will go on [journeying] until I have reached the confluence of the two seas, or have spent a long time [traveling].” So when they reached the confluence between them, they forgot their fish, which found its way into the sea, sneaking away. So when they had passed on, he said to his lad, “Bring us our meal. We have certainly encountered much fatigue on this journey of ours.” He said, “Did you see?! When we took shelter at the rock, indeed I forgot about the fish -and none but Satan made me forget To mention it!- And it made its way into the sea in an amazing manner!’ He said, “That is what we were after!” So they returned, retracing their footsteps. [There] they found one of Our servants whom We had granted a mercy from Ourselves, and taught him a knowledge from Our own. Moses said to him, ‘May I follow you for the purpose that you teach me some of the probity you have been taught?” He said, “Indeed you cannot have patience with me! And how can you have patience about something you are not in the know of?” He said, “You will find me, God willing, to be patient, and I will not disobey in any matter.” He said, “If you follow me, do not question me concerning anything until I [myself] make a mention of it to you.” So they went on. When they boarded the boat, he made a hole in it. He said, “Did you make a hole in it to drown its people?” You have certainly done a monstrous thing!” He said, “Did I not say, indeed you cannot have patience with me?” He said, “Do not take me to task for my forgetting, and do not be hard upon me.” So they went on. When they*

encountered a boy, he slew him. He said, 'Did you slay an innocent soul, without [his having slain] anyone? You have indeed done a dire thing!" He said, "Did I not tell you, indeed you cannot have patience with me?" He said, "If I question you about anything after this, do not keep me in your company. You have already got sufficient excuse on my part." So they went on. When they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to extend them any hospitality. There they found a wall which was about to collapse, so he erected it. He said, "Had you wished, you could have taken a wage for it." He said, "This is where you and I shall part. I will inform you about the interpretation of that over which you could not maintain patience. As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who work on the sea. I wanted to make it defective, for behind them was a king seizing every ship usurpingly. As for the boy, his parents were faithful [persons], and We feared he would overwhelm them with rebellion and unfaith. So We desired that their Lord should give them in exchange one better than him in respect of purity and closer in mercy. As for the wall, it belonged to two boy orphans in the city. Under it there was a treasure belonging to them. Their father had been a righteous man. 'So your Lord desired that they should come of age and take out their treasure -as a mercy from your Lord. I did not do that out of my own accord. This is the interpretation of that over which you could not maintain patience.'[1]

In the above quoted story, Moses' companion and mentor unveiled three unknown things from the Unseen:

1. *Sūrat al-Kahf (The Cave):* 60-82.

1- the reason for making a hole in the boat and thus making it defective.

2- The reason for killing a youth.

3- The reason for reconstructing and erecting the wall which was about to collapse.

3- Jesus’ Knowledge of the Unseen

Jesus Christ (‘a), who is the last link between former prophets (‘a) and the Prophet of Islām (s), is one of those apostles who had been endowed with knowledge of the Unseen. He describes himself in this way:

‘*I have certainly brought to you a sign from your Lord: I will create for you out of clay the form of a bird, then I will breathe into it, and it will become a bird by Allah’s leave. And I heal the blind and the leper and I revive the dead by Allah’s leave. And I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. There is indeed a sign in that for you, should you be faithful.*’[1]

Perhaps the above quoted verses suffice to illustrate that prophets (‘a) and Allah’s saints (‘a) were endowed with knowledge of the Unseen.

We will now adduce some of the Noble Prophet (s) and Imāms’ knowledge of the Unseen and predictive powers:

4- The Noble Prophet’s Knowledge of the Unseen

1- *His prediction that Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) would be killed by the most ill-fated man:*

1. Ibid.

Tears welled up in the eyes of the Noble Prophet (s) as he told ‘Alī (‘a), ‘In this month (Ramathān), your blood will be shed. I can see you getting killed by the most ill-fated man in the entire history of mankind while you are performing the ritual prayers. He will strike your head [with a sword] and thus redden your beard with the blood flowing from your head.’[1]

2- *His prediction that Abū Dhar would die in solitude:*

During one of the wars, Abū Dhar was left behind the Muslim army. The more he pressured his camel to move faster, the more he lagged behind. He realized that there was no benefit in riding his camel, so he dismounted and followed the Muslim army on foot, hoping that he would catch up with them sooner.

The Noble Prophet (s) ordered the Muslim army to camp at a certain place and rest. All of a sudden, they saw a shadow carrying a heavy load coming their way. One of the Noble Prophet’s (s) companions recognized him and told Allah’s Messenger (s), ‘That man coming on his own is Abū Dhar.’ Then the Noble Prophet (s) said, ‘May Allah have mercy on Abū Dhar; he is coming alone, he will die alone and will be raised alone [on the day of resurrection]’[2]

The future came to prove the truth of the Noble Prophet’s (s) prescient knowledge and predictions, because Abū Dhar died in the desert of Rabathah, where he had been

1. Tārikh Baghdādi, 1/135; Kāmil Mubrad, 2/132, Nahj al-Balāgha, sermon no. 151.
2. *Sīrat Ibn Hishām,* 2/523.

exiled, away from people and only in the presence of his daughter.

These two instances suffice to prove that the Noble Prophet (s) was endowed with prescience and knowledge of the Unseen, otherwise citing all his predictions and disclosures of the Unseen calls for writing an independent book.

On this basis, Allah’s saints (‘a) can tell future events by Allah’s will and, perhaps on account of their being inspired relaters, can reveal the Unseen.

Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī’s Revelations of the Unseen

On account of being inspired relaters, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) and the rest of the Imāms (‘a) made prescient revelations of the Unseen, some of which we will hereunder adduce:

1- The City of Basra would get drowned

During the battle of Jamal, Basra got conquered; the enemy army got defeated and Talha and Zubayr got killed. Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) entered the Mosque and went on the pulpit. After a brief introduction, he stated:

‘By Allah, your city would certainly be drowned so much so that as though I see its Mosque like the upper part of a boat or a sitting ostrich. (Another version: Like the bosom of a bird in deep sea).

It seems as though I look at this habitation of yours that water has so engulfed that nothing can be seen of it except

the highest part of Mosque appearing like the bosom of a bird in deep sea.'[1]

Ibn Abī al-Hadīd says, 'So far Basra has twice been drowned; the first time was during the era of al-Qādir Billah and the next time was during the era of al-Qā'im Billah. Overflowing waters of the Persian Gulf and torrential rains drowned this city; the only building that could be seen was the Cathedral Mosque, which stands on a plateau. It could be seen like the upper part of a boat or the bosom of a bird in deep sea.'[2]

2- Mu'āwiyah would conquer Iraq and dominate it

Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) predicted that he would depart this primordial life before Mu'āwiyah died, and announced that Mu'āwiyah would then conquer Iraq and dominate its people. Of course Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) did not mention Mu'āwiyah by name, but enumerated qualities which match no one but him.

'He will ask you to speak ill of me, and to show aversion to me. Once he asks you to speak ill of me, do it because that is cause of purification for me and redemption for you, but never be averse to me from the bottom of your hearts, since I was born on the true nature of Islām and submitted to the call of the Noble Prophet (s) before anyone else, and migrated to Medīna to join the Prophet of Allah.'[3]

1. Nahj al-Balāgha, sermon no. 12.
2. Sharh Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, 71/253.
3. Ibid.

3- Not even Ten Kharijites will remain Alive while not even Ten of His Followers will be killed

When Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) had been told that the Kharijites had crossed the bridge of Nahrawan, he said, ‘Their falling place is on the side of the river (Euphrates). By Allah, not even ten of them will survive while from your side not even ten will be killed.’[1]

Ibn Abī al-Hadīd says, ‘This revelation of the Unseen is one of the miracles of Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) and its truth has been successively recounted.

During the war which took place between the soldiers of Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) and the Kharijites, nine Kharijites left the battlefield alive and only eight of the soldiers of Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) got martyred.’

1. Nahj al-Balāgha, sermon no. 58.

Chapter Five:
The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

1- Who are the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) according to the Shī‘ah?

Question: The Holy Qur’ān declares that Allah has desired to repel all impurities and vices from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). The question that comes to mind is that who, in the eyes of the Shī‘ah, are the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)?’

Response: The questioner has the following Qur’ānic verse in mind:

‘*Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, And purify you with a thorough purification.*’[1]

In order to examine the ‘Verse of Purification’, it is necessary to first discuss two matters:

1- What is the meaning of Ahl al-Bayt (the People of the House) and in what instances do the Arabs employ this term?
2- In regard to whom was this verse sent down?

Explanation of the Term ‘Ahl al-Bayt’

The term Ahl al-Bayt is a compound word, consisting of two base words:
1- Ahl
2- Bayt

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1. *Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates):* 33.

The meaning of both these words is clear and apparent, and there is no need to recount statements of Arab etymologists in order to explain them.

In general, *ahl* denotes every person who has some kind of relationship, attachment and intimate familiarity with a subject. For instance, *ahl al-kitāb* means people who follow one of the divine books, *ahl al-amr* denotes leaders, *ahl al-rajul* implies people who are related to a man, *ahl al-Islām* refers to the followers of Islām, *ahl-injīl* means followers of the Gospel (Christians).

Therefore, *ahl al-bayt* has a comprehensive meaning which includes the wives and children of a man. That is why the Holy Qur'ān has expressly employed this term in regard to Abraham's wife:

'*Certainly Our messengers came to Abraham with the good news, and said, "Peace!" "Peace!" He replied. His wife, standing by, laughed as We gave her the good news of [the birth of] Isaac, and Jacob, after Isaac. She said, "Oh, my! Shall I, an old woman, bear [children], and [while] this husband of mine is an old man?! This is indeed an odd thing! They said, "Are you amazed at Allah's dispensation? [That is] Allah's mercy and His blessing upon you, members of the household (ahl al-bayt). Indeed He is all-laudable, all-glorious.*"'[1]

Who are the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)?

Now we have to find out to whom the term Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in the 'Verse of Purification' refers. Without

1. *Sūrat Hūd:* 69-73.

proof that this term is limited to a certain number of people, it will be employed in its comprehensive meaning that includes the wives and children of a man. But categorical clues and evidence indicate that Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) refers to the Noble Prophet (s), ‘Alī (‘a), Fātimah (‘a), Hassan (‘a) and Husayn (‘a), and that no other person is included.

The clues and evidence for this assertion are:

1- Al-bayt refers to a specific house

‘Al’ in the term al-bayt is a definite article that refers to a specific house (*al* means *the*, and *al-bayt* means *the house*). If the verse meant the houses of the wives of the Noble Prophet (s), it would have said *ahl al-buyūt*, because wherever the Holy Qur’ān speaks about them, it uses the plural form, not the singular:

‘*Stay in your houses (buyūtikunna) and do not display your finery with the display of the former [days of ignorance]. Maintain the prayer and pay the zakāt, and obey Allah and His apostle.*’[1]

In this verse, every one house of the houses of the Noble Prophet’s wives has been counted as a separate house belonging to a particular wife, whereas the ‘Verse of Purification’ mentions a specific house and naturally, we have to identify and particularize which this one house is. It can not be said that this house is one of the houses belonging to the wives of the Noble Prophet (s) because in this case the purport of the verse will become unclear and

1. *Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates):* 33.

ambiguous. Besides this, there is no reason to prefer one house to the rest of the eight houses.

For this reason, this house ought to be other than one of the houses of the Noble Prophet's wives, and it is none other than the house of Fātima (‘a); a house which, while belonging to her, also belongs to the Prophet of Allah (s) and in which four people used to live jointly.

This issue is confirmed by a Hadīth which Suyūti has recounted while commenting on the verse '*In houses Allah has raised and wherein His Name is celebrated*.'[1] He writes, 'When this verse was revealed, the Noble Prophet (s) recited it in the Mosque. A certain man stood up and asked, "To who do these great houses belong?" The Noble Prophet (s) responded, "To Allah's prophets (‘a) and messengers." Then Abū Bakr stood up, and while pointing at the house of Fātima (‘a) and ‘ Alī (‘a), asked, "Is this house also one of those elevated houses?" The Messenger of Allah responded, "Yes. It is one of the most elevated of those houses."'[2]

2- Masculine Pronouns

In Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates), from verse twenty nine up to verse thirty four, the Holy Qur'ān talks about the wives of the Noble Prophet (s). In accordance with Arabic grammatical rules, all the pronouns in these verses are feminine. In this regard more than twenty feminine pronouns have been employed.

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1. *Sūrat al-Nūr (The Light):* 36.
2. Al-Dur al-Manthūr, 6/203, Tafsīr *Sūrat al-Nūr*; Rūh al-Ma‘āni, 18/174.

But the turn comes for the verse under discussion- which is at the end of verse thirty three- there is a change of tone, and the addressee as well as the pronouns employed are changed into masculine. Therefore, we have to find out the reason and aim for this change of pronouns.

There is no other reason for the change in pronouns except that this verse was revealed for other than the Noble Prophet’s wives, even if it is sandwiched in the context of verses related to them. The reason for this intermixture and why the addressee is suddenly changed from feminine to masculine will be discussed later.

3- The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in the Noble Prophet’s Words

Recurrently transmitted Hadīths of the Noble Prophet (s) indicate that the People of the House (Ahl al-Bayt) in the ‘Verse of Purification’ are none other than Allah’s Messenger (‘a) himself and the people living in Fātima’s house, and these traditions have been transmitted by a number of the Noble Prophet’s (s) companions, some of whom are:

1. Abū Sa‘īd Khudarī,
2. Anas bin Mālik,
3. Abū Ishāq,
4. Wāsilah bin al-Asqa‘,
5. Abū Hurayrah,
6. Abū al-Hamrah,
7. Sa‘d bin Abī Waqqas,
8. ‘Āishah,

9. Umm Salmah,

10. Ibn Abbās.

The contents or purport of these Hadīths indicates that in order to clarify who the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are, the Noble Prophet (s) did two specific things, every one of which is worthy paying heed to:

1- He spread a garment and cloak over five individuals and he stopped Umm Salamah from going under the garment when she wanted to, and said, ‘O God! These are my Ahl al-Bayt. O Lord! Purify them from every kind of impurity.’

2- For eight months or more, the Noble Prophet (s) used to pass by Fātima Zahra’s house when going to the Mosque to perform the morning prayers and, while reciting the ‘Verse of Purification’, used to invite them to go to the Mosque for prayer.

Therefore, through these two deeds, the Noble Prophet (‘a) completely specified who the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are. We will now briefly recount some of these Hadīths:

Abū Sa‘īd Khudarī says, ‘The Messenger of Allah (s) stated, “This verse was revealed in regard to me, ‘Alī (‘a), Fātima (‘a), Hassan (‘a) and Husayn (‘a).’

Umm Salamah says, ‘This verse was revealed in my house. That same day Fātima Zahra (‘a) brought food for the Noble Prophet (s). The Noble Prophet (s) said, “Go and bring your husband ‘Alī and your two children.” Fātima Zahra (‘a) went to call the people mentioned and returned while holding her two children and ‘Alī (‘a) was following them behind.

The Noble Prophet (s) embraced Hassan (‘a) and Husayn (‘a). ‘Alī (‘a) sat by the Noble Prophet’s right hand and Fātima Zahra (‘a) sat by the Noble Prophet’s left hand. All the five began eating the food which the Noble Prophet’s daughter had prepared and had brought for her father. Suddenly, the Angel of Revelation descended and brought the Verse of Purification. Then the Noble Prophet (s) got the cloak which he used to cover himself with at night and invited everyone to come under it. He brought his hands out from under the cloak and three times said, ‘O Lord! These are my Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). For this reason, remove every kind of impurity and evil.’

I wanted to go under the cloak when I heard this supplication so that I may be one of those endowed with such virtue. I lifted one side of the cloak so that I may therefrom go inside and join them. The Noble Prophet (s) pulled it from my hands. I asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Am I not one of your Ahl al-Bayt (s)?’ The Noble Prophet (s) responded, ‘You are a good and virtuous woman, and one of the Messenger’s wives.’

The contents of this Hadīth, as has been recorded in all books of tradition and exegesis (*tafsīr*), indicate that this verse particularly refers to these five people and none besides them, even the best and purest of the Noble Prophet’s (s) wives, is included in this virtue.

For eight months, whenever the Noble Prophet (s) was going to the Mosque for the morning prayers, he used to pass by Imām ‘Alī’s house and say, ‘Prayer! Prayer! “Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O

People of the Household, And purify you with a thorough purification.'"[1]

Considering the existence of these Hadīths, can one interpret the Verse of Purification in another way? It is surprising that Ihsān Ilahi Zahīr, the chief editor of the magazine *Tarjumān al-Hadīth* of Lahore in Pakistan, who considers himself as a translator and spokesperson of the Noble Prophet's (s) Hadīth has the audacity to overlook all these Hadīths which prove for whom the Verse of Purification was revealed. In his book *Al-Shī'ah wa Ahl al-Bayt* (The Shī'ah and the Ahl al-Bayt), he has relied on the traditions of others to state that this verse was revealed for the wives of the Noble Prophet (s) and that his children are figuratively included in it.

The only question which remains is why the Verse of Purification is amidst verses related to the wives of the Noble Prophet (s)?

The response is that sometimes the Holy Qur'ān, while in the midst of expounding some theme, leaves it and embarks on another. A little while later it comes back to the initial topic. Consider this example:

In the story of Joseph ('a), when it was found out that the wife of the chieftain was guilty of guile, the chieftain addressed his wife:

'*This is [a case] of you women's guile! Your guile is great indeed!*'[2]

1. Tafsīr Suyūti, 22/5-7; Tafsīr al-Dur al-Manthūr, 5/198-199.
2. *Sūrat Yūsuf (Joseph):* 28.

In the midst of his conversation with his wife, he suddenly addresses Joseph (‘a), saying:

‘*Joseph, let this matter alone, and you, woman, plead for forgiveness for your sin, for you indeed have been erring.*’[1]

Two reasons can be adduced regarding why the issue of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) has been mentioned in the midst of verses related to the wives of the Noble Prophet (s):

1- At times Allah threatens the wives of the Prophet (s) when addressing them, saying:

‘*O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits a gross indecency, her punishment shall be doubled, and that is easy for Allah.*’[2]

In this case, Allah, by mentioning the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their perfections, wants to make the wives of the Noble Prophet (s) know that this household is the best role model for you and that it is better for you to emulate their way of life.

2- A lot of Muslims belonging to the early days of Islām held grudges against Imām ‘Alī (‘a) and his household. Every tribe and clan had at least one of their persons killed by Imām ‘Alī (‘a) during Islāmic wars. It is for this reason that a lot of them were hurt and saddened by Imām ‘Alī (‘a), and this hatred and rancor became apparent after the sad departure of the Noble Prophet (s). A lot of groups took their vengeance on Imām ‘Alī (‘a) and his family in one way or another.

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1. Ibid, v. 29.
2. *Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates):* 30.

It is because of this animosity that the Noble Prophet (s), on Allah's orders, put the verse related to their purity and infallibility in the midst of verses concerning his wives so that it may not be very manifest. Then in order that there may be no mistakes about its meaning, the Noble Prophet (s) explained its purport through the Sunnah and Hadīths.

We will conclude this discourse by recounting traditions from Sa'd bin Abī Waqqas:

In his Sahīh, Tirmidhi transmits from Sa'd bin Abī Wiqās that during the event of Mubāhalah, the Noble Prophet (s) called 'Alī ('a) and Fātimah ('a), Hassan ('a) and Husayn ('a) and said, 'O Lord! These ones belong to me.'

Elsewhere in his Sahīh, he says that the Noble Prophet (s) covered Hassan ('a), Husayn ('a), 'Alī ('a) and Fātimah ('a) and said, 'O Lord! These are my Ahl al-Bayt ('a). O Lord! Purify them from every kind of evil and impurity.' Umm Salamah asked, 'O Prophet of Allah! Am I too one of them?' The Messenger of Allah responded, 'Stay in your place and do not come under the cloak. You are a good woman.'[1]

1. Jāmi ' al-Usūl, 10/101-102.

2- The Angel's Talking with Fātimah Zahra (‘a)

Question: How is Fātimah Zahra's talking with the angel explainable?

Response: There is no doubt that the Angel of Revelation and/or other angels speak with prophets(‘a) and saints (‘a) and thus place divine revelation at their disposal, but this is not exclusive of the Prophets (‘a). Angels speak with pious people too, even if they may not be prophets (‘a). The people to whom angels descend and speak are called inspired relaters (*muhaddath*).

In the Hadīths of various Islāmic sects, inspired relaters are mentioned as people with whom angels speak. An inspired relater (*muhaddath*) has to have attained such a level of perfection as to hear the voices of angels with ordinary human ears. The world is full of voices from the intermediary world which most people, because of lacking the ability, can not hear. But those who have climbed up the ladder of perfection and virtue can hear and perceive voices from the intermediary world, and the Archangel Gabriel speaks with them and they hear his voice.

For this reason, in the Hadīths, the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s) has been called an inspired relater, which by itself is indicative of her perfection.

Myopic people hold that it is impossible for angels to speak to people who are not prophets (‘a), whereas

the Holy Qur'ān narrates that an angel used to speak to Mary (‘a), the mother of Jesus Christ:

‘*And when the angel said,*

“O Mary, Allah has chosen you and purified you, and He has chosen you above the world’s women.

O Mary, be obedient to your Lord, and prostrate and bow down with those who bow [in worship]”’[1]

The angel speaking with an individual is not a sign of his prophethood and apostleship, but a sign of his having attained the peak of perfection, which enables him to hear the voices and words of angels.

Besides this, the Holy Qur'ān recounts the angel's conversation with Sarah, Abraham's wife:

‘*Certainly Our Messengers came to Abraham with good news, and said, “Peace!” “Peace!” He replied. His wife, standing by, laughed as We gave her the good news of [the birth of] Isaac,and of Jacob, after Isaac. She said, “Oh, my! Shall I, an old woman, bear [children], and [while] this husband of mine is an old man?! That is indeed an odd thing!” They said, “Are you amazed at Allah’s dispensation? [That is] Allah’s mercy and His blessings upon you, members of the household. Indeed He is all-laudable, all-glorious.*”[2]

The issue of divine inspiration and revelations from the Unseen is a comprehensive theological and philosophical theme, which can not be discussed here. However, we can briefly say that the era of prophethood and apostleship in

1. *Sūrat Āl-Imr ān (Family of Imran):* 42.
2. *Sūrat Hūd:* 69-73.

the sense of leading mankind by means of legislative revelation has been sealed, and no prophet will come after the Noble Prophet (s) of Islām, but the door of divine inspiration and revelations from the Unseen has never been sealed. People who are endowed with divine insight and higher perception see and hear what other human beings can not hear and perceive. In this regard, the Holy Qur'ān says:

'*O you who have faith! If you are wary of Allah, He shall appoint a criterion*[1] *for you, and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you, for Allah is a dispenser of a great grace*.'[2]

1. That is, a knowledge which will enable you to distinguish between truth and falsehood.
2. *Sūrat Anfāl (The Spoils):* 29.

3- The Method of Blessing, Saluting and Greeting the Noble Prophet (s)

Question: How should we bless, salute and greet the Noble Prophet (s)?

Response: Saluting and sending peace unto the best of human beings is a religiously acceptable deed. Allah Himself has taken precedence in doing this and has ordered angels and the believers to bless the Noble Prophet (s):

'*Indeed Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who have faith! Invoke blessings on him and invoke Peace upon him in a worthy manner*.'[1]

Blessing the Noble Prophet ('a) all the time and in all conditions is a recommendable deed and in its order, the above quoted blessed verse has not fixed any specific time and place for this deed. It is especially recommendable to bless and salute the Noble Prophet (s) when one hears [or comes across] his name during reciting the call to prayer (*athān*) and the Holy Qur'ān.

The method of blessing and saluting the Noble Prophet (s) has been transmitted in the Hadīth that 'Abd al-Rahmān bin Abī Layla quoted from Ka'b bin 'Ajzah and in authentic Sunni books of tradition. We will hereunder translate a part of this Hadīth:

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1. *Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates):* 56.

Ka‘b bin ‘Ajza asked ‘Abd al-Rahmān, ‘Are you ready for me to recount to you a Hadīth that I heard from the Noble Prophet (s) so that it may be my gift to you?’

‘Abd al-Rahmān answered, ‘I am ready to listen.’

Ka‘b bin ‘Ajza said, ‘I asked the Noble Prophet (s), “We know how to greet one another, but how should we bless and salute you and your Ahl al-Bayt (a)?”’

The Noble Prophet (s) responded, ‘Say, “O Allah! Send peace upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, in the same way that you sent peace upon Abraham and the household of Abraham. Indeed You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, in the same way that You blessed Abraham and the Household of Abraham. Indeed You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.’[1]

It can clearly be concluded from this explanation and statement that when blessing and saluting the Noble Prophet (s), we also ought to bless and salute his Household so that our blessings and salutation may be complete. Only blessing and saluting the Noble Prophet (s), as do some people in their speeches and writings nowadays, is completely against the orders of the Noble Prophet (s).

Ibn Hajr Haythami (899- 974 AH) thus quotes the Noble Prophet (s), ‘Do not send interrupted or broken peace and blessings on me.’ He was asked, ‘What do you mean [by this]?’ He responded, ‘No not keep silent after saying, “O

1. Sahīh Bukhāri, 4/118.

Allah! Send peace and blessings on Muhammad." But rather say, "O Allah! Send peace upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad."[1]

For this reason, the Shiite method of blessing and saluting the Noble Prophet (s) is complete and according the Hadīth transmitted by Sahīh Bukhāri, which is the most authentic Sunni book of tradition.

Of course it is befitting to say the complete version, 'Say, "O Allah! Send peace upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, in the same way that you sent peace upon Abraham and the household of Abraham. Indeed You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, in the same way that You blessed Abraham and the Household of Abraham. Indeed You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious', but sometimes this is not done for reasons of brevity and it suffices to just say 'O Allah! Send peace upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad' as the Noble Prophet (s) did in the second Hadīth.

Besides this, it can be said that the sentence 'In the same way that You blessed Abraham and the Household of Abraham' is not a part of the salutation, but an instructional expression; that is to say, O Allah! In the same way that You blessed Abraham and the Household of Abraham, do also send peace upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, and these two sentences can be separated from one another. It is also worth saying that in the authentic books of Sunni tradition, the companions of the Noble Prophet (s) have not been included as part of

1. Al-Sawā'iq al-Marhaqah, /146.

the salutation, while the Sunnis consider including the companions as way of sending complete peace and blessings on the Noble Prophet (s); they say, 'O Allah! Send peace upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and the Companions of Muhammad.'

4- Exaggerated and Extremist Beliefs regarding the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

Question: Are Shiite beliefs concerning the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) not extremist and exaggerated?

Response: Ghuluw (extremism or exaggeration) denotes the act of exceeding limits and bounds, or making something seem larger, better, worse or more important than it really is. For instance, introducing a general doctor as a specialist, or exceeding limits in praising the physical and /or spiritual beauty of an individual, are acts of exaggeration. And because going too extremes is a reproachable thing, Allah has advised the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) not to exceed limits in their religion:

‘O People of the Book! Do not exceed the bounds in your religion, and do not attribute anything to Allah except the truth.’[1] ‘*Say, “O People of the Book! Do not unduly exceed the bounds in your religion and do not follow the fancies of a people who went astray in the past, and led many astray, and [themselves] strayed from the right path.’*[2]

Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) asserts that the conduct and speech of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are the limits and bounds of divine law and belief, saying, ‘We [the members of the Prophet’s family] are like the pillow in the middle. He

1. *Sūrat al-Nisā’ (Women):* 171.
2. *Sūrat al-Mā’idah (The Table):* 77.

who lags behind has to come forward to it while he who has exceeded the bounds has to return to it.'[1]

Accusing the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) of exaggeration is a futile idea that arises from ignorance about their beliefs and basic tenets.

In the domain of monotheism (*tawhīd*), an exaggerator (*ghāli*) is one who believes that the Imāms (‘a) are higher than the position of servitude and conjectures that they are either God and/ or the source of God's actions. For instance, some who says that the Imāms (‘a) are the creators of the sky and the earth (polytheism in creatorship) or believes that the management of the created world is in their hands or that they are the sustainers, the givers of life and the ones who cause to die (polytheism in management).

Or one who says that legislating divine law has been entrusted to them and making things licit and illicit is in their hands (polytheism in legislation) is a *ghāli* (exaggerator or extremist).

The followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have not in the least bit exceeded the bounds in all the levels of monotheism, some of which we have mentioned above. They believe that it is only Allah who is the Creator, the Governor and Legislator and that the Imāms (‘a) are only higher and loftier human beings.

According to Shiites, the sick who get cured or changes that occur in the cosmos in particular instances under the auspices of their supplication all take place by the leave of

1. Nahj al-Balāgha, short saying no. 109.

Allah and they are like miracles which Jesus Christ (‘a) performed.

Their intercession on the day of resurrection will also take place with the permission of Allah and we implore their assistance because of the lofty status which they enjoy in the sight of Allah. Mentioning their virtues and glorious deeds is also a kind of expressing love and affection for the Household of the Noble Prophet (s), and loving them is something that the Holy Qur’ān and the prophetic traditions have approved. Loving the Household of the Noble Prophet (s) is one of the basic tenets of religion which the Holy Qur’ān and the Sunnah affirm.[1]

The Shiites also believe that the members of the Noble Prophet’s (s) Household have been endowed with and taught knowledge of the Unseen by the will and permission of Allah.

After the conquest of Basrah, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) went on the pulpit and made predictions about important events that were going to take place in that city.

One of his companions asked him, ‘Have you been endowed with knowledge of the Unseen?’ Imām ‘Alī (‘a) laughed and said, ‘What I am informing you about does not constitute knowledge of the Unseen, but the things that I was taught by the one (i.e the Noble Prophet (s)) who had knowledge of the Unseen.’[2]

1. Sunan Tirmithi, Kitāb Manāqib no. 3772 and 37751; Mustadrak Hākim, 3/177.
2. Nahj al-Balāgha, sermon no. 128.

When the Holy Qur'ān asserts that knowledge of the Unseen only belongs to Allah[1], it means essential and unlimited knowledge of the Unseen which entirely belongs to the Creator of the world and is completely in need of Him.

On this basis, under no circumstances can these beliefs be construed as signs of exaggeration or extremism (*ghuluw*) and exceeding bounds regarding the Imāms (‘a) of the Noble Prophet's (s) descent.

The eighth Imām (‘a), in one of his supplications, shunned and rebuffed the exaggerators of his time. In the aforesaid supplication, Imām Reza (‘a) rejects the beliefs of the extremists, that the Imāms (‘a) are the creators of the world and givers of sustenance. This supplication indicates that upon witnessing some of the supernatural deeds of the Imāms (‘a), some short sighted people conjectured that the Imāms (‘a) were divine. That is why Imām Reza (‘a) rejects their futile beliefs. Thus is the supplication of Imām Reza (‘a):

‘O Lord! I refute and shun the words that some people speak respecting us; words which we ourselves have not uttered. O Lord! You are the Creator of the world and sustainer of Your servants. It is You that I worship and it is from You that I seek help.

O Lord! Lordship and divinity belongs to you. I shun those people who hold that we are their creators and I am disgusted by those who imagine that we are their

1. ‘Say, "No one in the heavens or the earth knows the Unseen except Allah, and they are not aware when they will be resurrected.' *Sūrat al-Naml (The Ant)*: 65.

sustainers. O Lord! We have not told them what they believe; therefore, do not hold us responsible for they say.'[1]

In this supplication, Imām Reza (ʻa) criticizes people who hold futile thoughts and believe that Allah has entrusted the management and sustainance of the world to the Noble Prophet (s) and the infallible Imāms (ʻa). He also expresses his disgust at people who conjecture that the infallibles (ʻa) have been appointed by Allah to create the sky and the earth, to provide sustenance to human beings, to give life to human beings and to cause them to die in this world and in the hereafter.

The Imāms (ʻa) and Using Natural Causes

No human being, no matter how high the position he occupies, is a substitute for intermediaries of divine grace, but he himself receives divine grace through that same intermediary; rays of the sun, snow and rainfall, as well as the blossoming of flowers, are all provisions of sustenance for prophets (ʻa), the infallible Imāms (ʻa) and the saints of Allah in the same way that the Angel of Revelation brings divine messages to the Noble Prophet (s) and the Angel of Death (*Malak al-Mawt*) takes his life[2], and [in

1. Bihār al-Anwār, 25/243.
2. In this regard, the Holy Qur'ān says, 'He is the All-dominant over His servants, and He sends guards to [protect] you. When death approaches anyone of you, Our messengers take him away and they do not neglect [their duty].' *Sūrat al-Anʻām (Cattle)*: 61.

the same way that] guardians are appointed to protect their lives, perfect their virtues and refine their moral traits.[1]

Therefore, all human beings, even perfect people, derive benefit from the cosmic order of cause and effect, and are not substitutes of any one intermediary of divine grace, whether that intermediary is material or spiritual. But this reality does not prevent them from performing miraculous deeds and affecting cosmic affairs when the common good for mankind demands it and when Allah grants permission, and without any egoistic intentions.

1. In sermon number 191 of Nahj al-Balāgha, Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) states, 'From the time of his weaning, Allah had put a mighty angel with him to take him along the path of high character and good behavior through day and night, while I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footsteps of its mother.'

Chapter Six:
Mahdism in Islām

1- The Imām of the Era and His Birth

Question: Has Imām Mahdī been born? And basically, did Imām Hassan ʻAskarī (ʻa) have a son?

Response: There is consensus among all Shiite scholars [of religion] that Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) was born on the 15th of Shaʻbān 255 (or 256) AH from a mother by the name of Narjis Khātūn in Samarrā in Iraq in the house of Imām Hassan ʻAskarī (ʻa). There are a lot traditions transmitted from his father in this regard; Hadīths whose recounting will prolong the discussion.

The ʻAbbāsids were ever planning to either prevent the birth of Imām Mahdī (ʻa) or to kill him if he ever got born, because his birth was a cause of alarm for all the corrupt orders of that day. In fact one of the reasons why they had placed Imām Hassan ʻAskarī (ʻa) under strict surveillance in Samarrā was that they wanted to become aware whenever his son was delivered.

The birth of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance), just like the birth of Moses (ʻa), was miraculous. Despite the constant and strict surveillance of the ʻAbbāsid government, Allah protected his last guardian, fathered by Imām Hassan ʻAskarī (ʻa), from the harm of the enemies. Hereunder is the list of some of the names of people who lived during the time of Imām Mahdī's birth and/ or saw him after his birth:

1- Hakīmah Khātūn the daughter of Imām Muhammad Taqī (‘a) and aunt of Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a); she says, “One day I went to the house of Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a). I wanted to return to my house on the night of the 15th of Sha‘bān 255 AH. The Imām (‘a) said to me, ‘Beloved aunt, stay with us because Allah’s friend and my successor will be born tonight.” I asked, “From which one of your bondwomen will he be born?” He said, ‘Susan.’ I did not see any signs of pregnancy in her, no matter how hard I scrutinized. After dinner, I slept in the same room with Susan. Before long, I woke up and started thinking about the words of Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a). Then I got up to perform the night prayers. Susan also woke up from sleep and began performing the night prayers. The night passed and it was now close to morning time, and yet there was still not the least sign of pregnancy in Susan. I almost doubted what Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) had told me when I heard his voice from the other room, “Beloved aunt, do not doubt what I said. My son’s birth is nigh.’

A few moments later, Allah’s saint was born pure and purified… I took the newborn to Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a)…”’[1]

Very few people managed to see Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) during the era of Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) because of the strict surveillance of the ‘Abbāsids but nevertheless some dependable people who were very close to Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) managed to see Imām Mahdī (‘a).

1. Ghaybah of Sheykh Tūsi, /141.

2- Abū Ghānim says, ‘Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) fathered a son whom he named Muhammad. On the third day after his birth, Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) showed the newborn to his companions and said, “This is my son. He will be your guardian and Imām after me. He is that same remainder of the Noble Prophet’s household whom all human beings are waiting for.’[1]

3- Hassan bin Husayn bin ‘Alawi says, ‘[When I was] in Samarrā, I went to see Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) and congratulate him on the birth of his son.’[2]

4- Hassan bin Munthir says, ‘One day Hamzah bin Abī Fath came to see me and said, “I bring you the glad tidings that last night Allah gave Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) a son, but ordered that this matter should be kept secret. I asked him his name. Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) said, ‘Muhammad.’’

5- Ahmad bin Ishāq says, ‘One day I went to see Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a). I had the intention of asking him about his successor. He himself began to talk about this [before I could ask]. He said, “O Ahmad bin Ishāq! From the time that Allah the High created this world, He has never let it and will never let it to be devoid of His proof. It is on account of this Proof of Allah that calamities are repelled from the earth, rain is sent down and the earth produces means of sustenance, [all of which are divine graces].’ I asked, “O son of Allah’s Prophet (s)! Who will succeed you as the Imām?” Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a) went inside the house and brought out a three year old son

1. Ithbāt al-Hudat, 6/431.
2. Ibid, /433.

whose beauty was like the moon on the fourteenth day of the month. He was holding him on his shoulder and said, ‘Ahmad! If you were not beloved by Allah and the Imāms (‘a), I would not have shown you my son. Know that this son bears the same name and title as that of the Prophet of Allah (s) and he is that same person who will fill the earth with justice and equity.’[1]

These are some of the prominent Shiite personalities who had the good luck of seeing Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) during the lifetime of Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a). It has to be mentioned though, that these were not the only people who had the good luck of seeing Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) during the lifetime of his father. There were a lot more people who saw him in the house of Imām Hassan ‘Askarī (‘a).[2]

Finally, we have to say that a great deal of prominent Sunni scholars have explicitly confirmed the birth of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance). In this regard, those interested should refer to the latest print of the book entitled Muntakhab al-Athar, pages 71 to 92. The author of this book has named 68 prominent Sunni scholars who have explicitly confirmed the birth of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) in their books.

1. Ibid, /439.
2. Bihār al-Anwār, 52/25, 78 and 86; Ithbāt al-Hidāh bilnusūs wa al-Mu‘jiz āt, 6/311 and 425; and 7/16; Yanābi‘ al-Mawaddah, bāb 82.

2- The Reason for the Occult Absence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance)

Question: What is the reason for the occult absence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) and why is he not present among the people in the same way that the other Imāms (‘a) used to live among the people?

Response: The occult absence of the Imām of the Era (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is a divine mystery or secret whose true nature or essence we may probably not understand. Temporary occult absence of divine leaders from the people has historical precedent in former communities and nations; Moses bin Imrān was in occult absence from his community for forty days when he had an appointment with Allah:

‘*And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights, and completed them with ten [more], thus the tryst of his Lord was completed in forty nights. And Moses said to Aaron, his brother, "Be my successor among my people, and set things right and do not follow the way of the agents of corruption*.”’[1]

Jesus Christ (‘a) was concealed from the sight of his community and thus his enemies were not able to kill him:

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1. *Sūrat al-A‘rāf (The Elevations):* 142.

'*And for their saying, "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of Allah" -though they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but so it was made to appear to them. Indeed those who differ concerning him*[1] *are surely in doubt about him:*[2] *they do not have any knowledge of that beyond following their conjectures, and certainly they did not kill him. Rather Allah raised him up toward Himself, and Allah is all-mighty, all-wise*.'[3]

Prophet Jonah ('a) was also in occult absence from his people:

'*And indeed Jonah was one of the apostles, when he absconded toward the laden ship*.'[4]

Basically, whenever an issue has been proved beyond doubt through recurrently transmitted Hadīths, one does not have to doubt or deny it even if he does not completely get to the bottom of its mystery or secret because entertaining such misgivings will lead to doubting a great deal of divine laws which are considered as religious needs and obligations.

The occult absence of the Imām of the Era (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is not exempt from this principle, and not comprehending the mystery or secret that lies behind it is no justification for doubting or negating it.

In spite of all this, the secret or mystery of the occult absence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his

1. Or 'it.'
2. Or it.
3. *Sūrat al-Nisā' (Women):* 157.
4. *Sūrat al-Saffāt (The Ranged Ones):* 140.

reappearance) can be understood within the confines of human understanding.

Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is the last infallible Proof of Allah who has been charged with fulfilling a very great ideal of spreading universal justice and installing the flag of monotheism in the world. This ideal calls for the passage of time, maturing of the human mind, perfection of human wisdom, and mankind's spiritual preparedness, so that the world may be ready to welcome the retinue of the Imām of justice and freedom. An early reappearance (*zuhūr*) of Imām Mahdī will not produce global and widespread uprising because if he appears among the people before the preconditions are fulfilled, he will meet the same fate (martyrdom) that the other Proofs of Allah met and will depart this corporeal world before the accomplishment of that great ideal.

The infallible leaders (ʻa) have also hinted at this in their Hadīths. Imām Bāqir (ʻa) said, 'The Remainder of Allah (*al-qā'im*) will be in occult absence before his reappearance.' The relater [of this Hadīth] asked for the reason and wisdom that lay behind this occult absence. The Imām (ʻa) responded, 'In order to prevent being killed.'[1] Besides this, other Hadīths mention the issue of testing and trying mankind; that is to say, during the period of the occult absence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance), people will experience hard

1. Kamāl al-Dīn of Sheykh Sadūq, bāb 14, Hadīths no 8, 9 and 10.

divine trials and the levels of the strength of their faith and belief will be measured.[1]

In short, Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is the last legatee of Allah who was created to perfect mankind in all its aspects and to create a single universal divine government. This hoped-for ideal will be accomplished once there is preparedness in human society to welcome and receive this Proof of Allah. In other than this case, the reappearance (*zuhūr*) of Imām Mahdī will not produce any fruit save his getting killed and annihilated, and that lofty ideal will not be accomplished. It is for this reason that his holiness Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) lives in occult absence from the people even though he is present among them and they see him but they can not recognize him. This is how he remains safe from the harm of the enemies of truth and justice.

In addition to this, the accomplishment of his universal government of justice calls for preconditions which did exist at the time of his birth. These preconditions have to get fulfilled with the passage of time or are in the process of being met. We will explain what these preconditions are in the response to question six of this chapter.

1. Bihār al-Anwār of Allāma Majlisi, 52/102 and 113- 114/ bāb al-Tamhis wa al-Nahi ‘an al-Tawaghit.

3- The People's Benefit from Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) during the Period of His Occult Absence

Question: What benefit do people derive from Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) during the period of his occult absence?

Response: From the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'ān, Allah's saints or representatives are of two kinds; the first kind consists of visible saints [or representatives] whom people know and the second type comprises saints [or representatives] in occult absence, whom people do not recognize even if he were to live among them and he were aware of their state of affairs.

The synchronous existence of both kinds of saints has been mentioned in *Sūrah Kahf* (The Cave); the visible one is Moses bin Imrān ('a) and the one living in occult absence was his temporary companion well known as Khidr. Khidr lived in such a way that not even Moses ('a) was acquainted with him and only knew him through the guidance of Allah and thus derived benefit from him. In this regard, the Holy Qur'ān states:

'*[There] they found one of Our servants whom We had granted a mercy from Ourselves, and taught him a knowledge from Our own. Moses said to him, "May I*

follow you for the purpose that you teach me some of the probity you have been taught?"'[1]

Thereafter the Holy Qur'ān explains some of the beneficial and valuable deeds of that saint living in occult absence and indicates that despite the fact that the people did not know him, they nevertheless used to derive benefit from his divine deeds and graces.

His holiness Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is also like Moses' companion; he is an unknown guardian whose deeds nevertheless benefit the Islāmic community. For this reason, his occult absence does not mean that he is detached and cut off from the community. On the contrary, he is, as has been explained in the traditions of the Infallibles ('a), like the sun behind a cloud which eyes can not be seen but gives light and warmth to the inhabitants of the earth.[2]

The Noble Prophet (s) said, 'Yes, I swear upon Allah, the One who raised me to the prophetic mission, that the people will derive benefit from him and the light of his guardianship during the period of his occult absence in the same way that they derive benefit from the sun when it is hidden behind clouds.'[3]

The spiritual rays of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance), in spite of being concealed behind clouds, have considerable effects which manifest the wisdom of his existence despite the suspension of educational and

1. *Sūrat al-Kahf (The Cave):* 65- 66.
2. Kamāl al-Dīn of Shaykh Sadūq, /485/ bāb 45/ Hadīth no. 4.
3. Bihār al-Anwār, 52/93 (as transmitted from Kamāl al-Dīn of Shaykh Sadūq).

instructional matters, as well as direct leadership. We will hereunder explain some of these effects:

1- Safeguarding the Religion of Allah

With the passage of time, the authenticity and fundamental reality of some religious laws either gets lost or is exposed to alteration because of mixing religious issues with matters of personal taste and thoughts, inclinations towards deviant [or errant] schools of thought and the falsification of divine notions by malevolent agents of corruption.

Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is the guardian of religious notions; his broad breast and high spirit preserve all the authentic divine characteristics and fundamental realities of religion so that divine proofs and the clear signs of Allah may not be nullified and extinguished. This is only one of the effects of his existence in occult absence.

2- Training Informed Expectants of His Reappearance

Contrary to what some people imagine, Imām Mahdī's connection and contact with people is not completely cut or severed, but as can be inferred from Islāmic traditions, a small number of the most ready individuals whose inner hearts are overfilled with love of Allah, faith and extraordinary sincerity and who are eager to accomplish the ideal of world reformation, peace and justice are in contact with his holiness the Imām of the Era (may Allah hasten his reappearance).

The occult absence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) does not mean that he lives in the form of

an invisible spirit, but that he lives a natural and tranquil life in such a way that he mingles freely with the people without being recognized. He selects people whose hearts are ready for his reappearance as well as prepares and instructs them to be ready more than ever before. According to the differences of their capacities and merits, prepared and perceptive people attain the good luck of perceiving Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance). Some people have had contact with the Remainder of Allah (may Allah hasten his reappearance) for some minutes, others for some hours, others for some days and some others for many years.

These are people who have so much ascended to the peak of knowledge and piety that there no longer exists any veil or barrier between them and the life giving light, whereas other human beings are living under the shadow of doubt and in darkness.

It is wrong of us to expect the sun to come up from under the clouds so that we may see it. It is nothing but vain conjecture and a big mistake to expect Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) to come down and show himself to us. It is us who have ascend beyond the clouds of doubt in order to perceive the Remainder of Allah (may Allah hasten his reappearance) and get satiated by the rays of his divine guidance.

In any case, training and instructing this group of expectants of his reappearance is another wise reason that is concealed in the occult absence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance).

3- Spiritual and Invisible Influence

As we know, the sun has an invisible ray whose decomposition produces the seven common colors, and it also has a series of rays called ultraviolet and infrared rays. Likewise, a great divine leader, whether he is a prophet (ʿa) or an Imām (ʿa), in addition to being endowed with legislative instruction which he implements through his sayings, conduct and ordinary educational programs, is also endowed with spiritual instruction which he carries out through spiritual influence that he exerts in the hearts and minds of human beings. Spiritual instruction can also be called existential instruction. In this kind of instruction, words, sayings and deeds are not employed, but only inner attraction and captivation is effective.

The blessed existence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) in occult absence also has this effect. Through the powerful and encompassing rays of his effective personality, he influences prepared hearts near and far and embarks on instructing and edifying them so that they may become perfect human beings. We can not see the magnetic poles of the earth with our eyes, but we can see their effects on magnet needles that guide us through the seas when we are in ships, through the deserts and through the skies when we are in airplanes. Throughout planet earth, millions of travelers find their way to their destinations through the guidance of magnetic waves and needles. Immense and small means of transportation (such as ships, airplanes, trucks, cars, motor cycles, bicycles, etc) are all guided by these apparently small magnetic needles and thus escape wandering about from place to place and losing their way.

Is it surprising if Imām Mahdī's living in occult absence guides, through his spiritual captivation, many hearts and minds all across the globe and thus saves them being lost? Of course we ought not to forget that the magnetic waves of the earth do not affect valueless metals, but only affect fine and sensitive magnetic metals which have a kind of similarity and cognation with the pole that produces magnetic waves. Thus, hearts which have connection with Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) and have established in their selves some kind of cognation and similarity with him will be affected by his spiritual captivation and attraction.

Existential effects and blessings of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) are more than can be explained in these limited pages. It is for this reason that we deem the aforementioned effects as sufficient to prove our point. Fortunately, Muslim scholars and researchers have comprehensively expounded the issue of the occult absence of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) in their writings so much so that anyone interested in more examination of this issue will have enough material to study, and we encourage all those interested to do so.

4- The Imām of the Era and His Long Life

Question: Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) was born in the year 255 AH and more than a thousand years have passed since then. The Question is that is it possible for man to live such a long life?

Response: This question can be answered in two ways:

1- The Occult or Supernatural Way

This question can be answered by adducing what the Holy Qur'ān and Hadīths recount concerning the long lives of some people which do not conform to our criteria:

'*Certainly We sent Noah to his people, And he remained with them for a thousand-less fifty years. Then the flood overtook them while they were wrongdoers.*'[1]

This verse only **hints at the period that Noah ('a) was propagating religion among his people, but does not mention how long he lived after the flood or before the flood.**

Likewise, the Holy Qur'ān says that if Jonah ('a) had not praised and glorified Allah, he would have remained in the belly of the fish up to the day of resurrection:

'*Indeed Jonah was one of the apostles, when he absconded toward the laden ship. And had he not been*

1. *Sūrat al-'Ankabūt (The Spider):* 14.

one of those who celebrate Allah's glory, he would surely have remained in its belly till the day they will be resurrected.'[1]

Therefore, why would not that same Allah who had kept, or was capable of keeping, his two apostles and representatives alive for so long, not keep His last saint and representative for so long under His bounty and grace? In this regard, consider the following noble Qur'ānic verse:

'*They did not regard Allah with the regard due to Him*.'[2]

The issue of Imām Mahdī's long life is an issue related to Allah's grace and bounty, without which uncounted bad events and calamities would have befallen his holiness the Imām of the Era (may Allah hasten his reappearance). It is Allah who has protected him from these events and has granted him a long life. Allah who made the world last this long is capable of keeping His Proof alive this long.

2- The Natural Way

Since medical and biological sciences have not categorically determined man's lifespan and have not stated that it is impossible to live beyond a certain age, man can increase the length of his life by first knowing what causes early old age and premature death and then countering them. Today, man's lifespan has increased in developed countries on account of improvements in general health care and sanitation. Man's lifespan very much depends on inheritance, the environment, the kind

1. *Sūrat al-Sāffāt (The Ranged Ones):* 139-144.
2. *Sūrat al-An'ām (Cattle):* 91.

of job and occupation, psychological and mental pressure as well as good and correct nutrition.

The increase of man's lifespan is not by itself a cause of death, but illnesses and harmful habits exhaust the main body organs and thus become nonfunctional. Even today there are people who live longer than a hundred years in countries like Turkey and the Balkan states.

In the history of man's life, there have been many people who lived long lives; many books have been written in this regard.

5- Delay in the Reappearance

Question: Why does Imām Mahdī not reappear?

Response: Imām Mahdī's agenda has one fundamental difference with that of the prophets (ʻa) and the rest of the Imāms (ʻa). The difference is that he is not charged with legislating, but with executing already legislated laws in all senses of the word. Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance) has the responsibility of implementing in the whole world all the principle teachings of Islām and disseminating the fundamentals of justice and equity as well as truth and reality in human society.

It is clear that execution of such a universal revolutionary agenda, by means of which the principles of justice and equity as well as truth and reality will be disseminated among the people in the world, calls for preconditions and prerequisites whose fulfillment is not possible save with the passage of time and perfection of all aspects of human society. Some of those preconditions and prerequisites:

1- Spiritual Readiness

In the first place the inhabitants of the earth have to be eager and ready for the execution of these principles, and as long as there is no demand from the people, delivering this kind of material and spiritual agenda to the people will not be effective at all. The law of demand and supply does not only apply to the economic order of man's life, but an analogous system also applies to his spiritual,

ethical, political and revolutionary life, and until there is no demand or desire for this system in the deepest recesses of people's hearts, delivering it will be met with failure.

Imām Bāqir (ʻa) says, ʻAllah will place His hand over the heads of people on the day that the Support of Muhammad's Family (*Qā'im Āl-i Muhammad*) rises [to establish universal justice] and thus He will gather the wise, and perfect their intellects.'[1]

Of course the passage of time, the failure of materialist laws and the appearance of universal stalemates [or blind alleys] will drive people into a corner and make them realize the truth that materialist principles and laws and the so called international organizations are incapable of solving the problems of life and establishing universal justice. This tiredness and hopelessness in human beings will prepare people to welcome a fundamental revolution and we know that this calls for the passage of time so that the bitter experiences of life may prove that materialist orders and human organizations are incapable and unable to execute the principles of justice, fulfill justice and to establish security and peace. Finally, as a result of hopelessness and pessimism, there will arise a demand in all human beings across the globe for the fulfillment of such a divine ideal and the ground for carrying out a universal revolution through a divine and heavenly man will be favorable.[2]

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1. Kāfi, 1/25, Kitāb al-ʻAql/ Hadīth no. 21.
2. One of the clear signs of the uprising of the Imām of the Era (may Allah hasten his reappearance), about which all Islāmic

2- The Perfection of Human Knowledge and Culture

Also, in order to establish a universal government of justice and equity, there is great need for the advancement of knowledge, the sciences and social culture. This is not possible and feasible without intellectual advancement and the passage of time.

Establishing a universal government under whose auspices justice, equity and divine law reign over the whole world and in which all people benefit from Islāmic individual and social rights is not possible without the existence of an advanced culture in all human aspects and is not practicable without a perfect culture. This also calls for the passage of time.

3- Perfection of the Mass Media

Such a government also needs the existence of a perfect means of mass communication under whose auspices it will manage to disseminate in the shortest possible time human laws, injunctions and principles. This also is not feasible without the advancement of human technology and the passage of time.

Hadīths have consensus, is that the whole of human race will be engulfed in injustice, inequity, oppression and tyranny. The clouds of pessimism and despair will hang over human society, and in truth, the pressure of oppression and tyranny will be so unbearable that, mankind will be ready for a fundamental and profound revolution under the leadership of a capable, powerful and divine man.

4- Cultivation of Human Faculties

Besides all that has been said, advancing such a goal and laying the foundations of such a revolution calls for active and productive human faculties, which in reality, make up the army of a universal revolution. Forming such an army and mobilizing such devoted and altruistic human beings who forsake everything in order to attain the goal and the truth demands the passage of time.

We read in some Hadīths that trying and testing human beings is the philosophy that lies behind the prolongation of the occult absence of the Imām of the Era (may Alllah hasten his reappearance). In Islāmic logic, trials and temptations do not mean ordinary tests and unveiling mysteries, but the intention is to cultivate pure souls and bring about utmost dexterity in human beings.[1]

All these four points[2] call for passage of considerable time and the development or advancement of the world in many aspects, as well as people's intellectual and spiritual preparedness for the acceptance of a universal government

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1. All the divine trials that divine prophets (‘a) and saints (‘a) experienced had the intention of purifying their souls and perfecting their faculties. Allah tested Abraham (‘a) with hard tasks and duties, as the Holy Qur'ān says, ‘And when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He said, "I am making you the Imam of mankind." The purpose of this test was to purify and edify his soul and faculties so that he may be well prepared to lead mankind.

2. These four points can be summed up thus: 1. Soul perfection, 2. Cultural perfection, 3. Perfection of the Mass Media, 4. Formation of a universal revolutionary army consisting of devoted and altruistic human beings.

based on truth and justice. It is then that this program will be executed and implemented under the leadership of Imām Mahdī (may Allah hasten his reappearance). This is one perspective of the philosophy of the prolongation of the occult absence of the Imām of the Era (may Allah hasten his reappearance).

Chapter Seven:
Juristic Questions and matters

1- Washing Hands

Question: Why do Shiites wash their hands from top to bottom during *wuzū* (ritual ablution) whereas those belong to other Islāmic sects wash their hands from bottom to top?

Response: We all know that ritual ablution (*wuzū*) is one of the preconditions or prerequisites of ritual prayer (*salāt*). We thus read in the blessed Sūrat al-Mā'idah:

'*O you who have faith! When you stand up for prayer, wash your hands up to the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet, up to the ankles.*'[1]

In the first sentence '*wash your hands up to the elbows*', the word *aidī* (hands) has been employed, which is a plural of *yad* (hand). To clarify why Shiites wash their hands from top to bottom, it is important to take two points into consideration:

1- In Arabic, the word *yad* has various meanings; sometimes it means only the fingers, at times it means from the fingers up to the wrist, at other times it means from the fingers up to the elbows and sometimes it means from the fingers to the shoulders.

2- The part whose washing is obligatory during *wuzū* (ritual ablution) is the length between the elbows and the

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1. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah (The Table):* 6.

fingers. The Holy Qur'ān has used the phrase '*up to the elbows*' in order to clarify the part that is obligatory to wash.

Because the word *yad* (hand) has various uses in Arabic, we can conclude that the phrase '*up to the elbows*' indicates the length of the hand whose washing is obligatory; that is to say, it means that the hands have to be washed up to the elbows, not more and not less, and it does not explain the method of washing the hands. That is to say, it does not explain whether we have to wash the hands from top to bottom or from bottom to top. So what is the method of washing hands? This pertains to common parlance and custom, and people usually wash their hands from top to bottom.

In addition to this, the Imāms of the Noble Prophet's Household ('a), who are the same as the Holy Qur'ān and are its rightful interpreters, practically showed us that the hands have to be washed from top to bottom because this is how they used to wash their hands when performing ritual ablution (*wuzū*).

2- Wiping the Feet instead of washing them

Question: Why do Shiites wipe their feet instead of washing them [when performing ritual ablution (*wuzū*)?

Response: Wiping the feet when performing ritual ablution (*wuzū*) is allowed and supported by the Holy Qur'ān and Hadīths. We will now briefly adduce support for our assertion from both the Holy Qur'ān and Hadīths:

The outward meaning of verse six of Sūrat al-Mā'idah explains that the one who intends to perform his ritual prayer (*salāt*) should first of all perform the ritual ablution (*wuzū*), which consists of two acts, one being washing (the face and the hands) and the second being wiping (a part of the head and the feet). This issue becomes clear by comparing and drawing parallels between the following Qur'ānic statements:

1- *Wash your hands up to the elbows.*

2- *And wipe a part of your heads and your feet,*

up to the ankles.

If we ask an indigenous Arab whose mind is not aware or informed about juristic disagreements and differences of opinion to tell us what he comprehends from the above statements, he will doubtless say that according to the Qur'ānic verse, our duty is to wash the face and the hands and to wipe [a part of] the head and the feet.

According to linguistic rules, the word *feet* is conjoined to the phrase '*[part of your] heads* by the conjunction 'and'.

'*Wash your hands up to the elbows and wipe a part of your heads* and *your feet,*

up to the ankles.'

Thus, the conclusion that must be drawn is that the feet have to be wiped, and it can not be claimed that the word '*feet*' has been joined to the word '*hands*', and thus draw the conclusion that the feet must be washed, because this would mean that an objective sentence (*wipe a part of your heads*) has been placed between two conjoined parts ('*Wash your hands up to the elbows'* and *'and your feet'*), for instance, wash your hands, and wipe your heads, and wash your feet. This is not correct according to Arabic grammar and besides this, it leads to erroneous denotation.

Shiite scholars have thoroughly discussed the meaning of the verse of ritual purification; in his Majma' al-Bayān, Tabarsi has also comprehensively discussed this verse.[1]

The Cause of Juristic Agreements and Differences of Opinion

Without doubt the outward meaning of the verse of ritual purification indicates that the one who intends to perform prayer has to wipe his feet when performing ritual ablution. The verse says that ritual purification has two parts:

1. Majma' al-Bayān, 2/163-167; al-Insāf fi Dām fiha al-Khilāf, 1/10-40.

1- Washing: the hands and the face.

2- Wiping: the head and the feet.

Whenever they asked Ibn Abbās how to perform ritual ablution, he used to respond, 'Divine revelation (the Holy Qur'ān) has commanded that the feet have to be wiped.'

He also used to say, 'People insist on washing the feet despite that they have been ordered to wipe them.'[1]

However, we have to find out how this juristic disagreement and difference of opinion in regard to either wiping or washing the feet arose.

It can be inferred from examining and studying Hadīths and the history of *wuzū* (ritual purification) that there were two causes for the appearance of deviation from the outward aspect of the verse of ritual purification:

1- Empires and Governments

Empires and governments had the most influence in changing the injunction of wiping the feet. In particular, Hajjāj bin Yūsuf used to insist that the feet have to be washed. He used to get very upset by the worshippers' dirty bare feet.

Anas bin Mālik, one of the Noble Prophet's (s) companions and one who had lived a long life, used to reside in Kūfa for some time. They told him that Hajjāj says that the outside and inside of the feet have to be washed. When he heard this, he got very upset and said, 'Allah speaks the truth and Hajjāj lies. Allah said, "*wipe a part of your heads and your feet,*

1. Al-Dur al-Manthūr, 3/1-4.

up to the ankles."'[1]

The Umayyads' commands that the feet must be washed were so serious and vigorous that jurists of that time could not dare oppose them.

Ahmad bin Hanbal relates that Mālik Ash'ari, one of the companions of the Noble Prophet (s), told his kith and kin, 'Call one another and gather together so that I may perform prayer for you in exactly the same way that the Noble Prophet (s) used to pray.' When they had gathered together, he asked, 'Is there not an outsider among you?' They responded, 'No.' He got a bucket of water and after washing his mouth and nose, thrice washed his face and hands, and wiped a part of his head and feet, and then performed the prayer.'[2]

2- Preferring the Common Good to the Outward Aspect of the Qur'ānic Verse

Preferring the common good and public interest to the outward aspect of the Holy Qur'ān is the basis of a great deal of heretical innovations in religion. We have mentioned some of these heretical innovations in a separate book entitled *Bid'ah*. It is this same theory that caused people to disregard wiping the feet and to begin washing them.

In a book entitled Ahkām al-Qur'ān,[3] Abū Bakr Rāzi, well known as Jassās (50-70AH), writes, 'The verse of ritual

1. Tafsīr Tabari, 6/82; Tafsīr al-Qur'ān of Ibn Kathīr, 2/20.
2. Musnad Ahmad, 5/342; Mu'jam Kabir Tabrāni, 3/28/ Hadīth no. 3412.
3. That is, Injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān.

purification (*wuzū*) is ambiguous as regards whether the feet have to be wiped or washed. Precautionary measures call for washing the feet, because in this case both possibilities (wiping and washing) are fulfilled.'[1]

The claim that the verse of ritual purification (*wuzū*) is ambiguous [or that it does not explain in detail whether we should wipe or wash our feet] is not compatible with its aim of explaining our duty. In addition to this, if we have to take precautionary measures when performing ritual ablution (*wuzū*), it means that we have performed it twice because wiping is essentially different from washing.

The author of al-Manār is one of the people who deny that the outward meaning of the verse of ritual purification denotes wiping the feet, but nevertheless says, 'What benefit is there in making dirty and filthy feet wet?!'[2]

He has neglected one point, which is that the verse of ritual purification does not only pertain to unclean Bedouins and dirty people, but that divine revelation synchronously pertains to both town dwellers and Bedouins and that this divine light will keep on shining until the day of resurrection.

It behooves us to ask the author of al-Manār that what benefit is there in wiping the head with one finger (which Shāfi'ī says is enough)? Why should one of those two be permissible and logical while the other is considered as impermissible? In addition to this, ritual purification (*wuzū*) is not only performed for cleanliness but is also

1. Ahkām al-Qur'ān, 2/346.
2. Al-Minār, 6/234.

intertwined with worship. The cleanest of people have to perform ritual purification for prayer as well, and unclean people have to wash their feet before performing ritual purification (*wuzū*). So far our discourse has been related to Qur'ānic verse of purification. We will now adduce Hadīths that state that the feet have to be wiped [instead of washed]:

The Noble Prophet's Hadīths which state that the Feet have to be wiped

Perhaps some people may imagine that in Sunni books, there are no Hadīths related from the Noble Prophet (s) which state the necessity of wiping the feet. When we carried out one research, we found more than thirty Hadīths which explained how the Noble Prophet (s) and his companions used to perform ritual ablution.

The clear denotation of the verse of ritual purification that the feet have to be wiped and the many conspicuous traditions of the Noble Prophet (s) that state that the feet must be wiped demand that Sunni jurists must reconsider their verdicts in this regard and thus tread the path of Islāmic unity in deeds and practices. In this regard, they have to follow and imitate the great number of the Noble Prophet's eminent companions and their immediate successors who used to wipe their feet when performing ritual ablution. We will hereunder adduce their names:

1- Imām ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a) said, ‘I saw the Prophet of Allah wiping the upper part of his feet.’[1]

2- Jābir bin ‘Abdullah says, ‘Imām Muhammad bin ‘Alī bin al-Husayn, well known as Bāqir al-‘Ulūm[2] and whose scientific and juristic greatness and eminence is a matter of consensus for all,[3] told me, “Wipe [a part of] your head and your feet.”’[4]

3- Basr bin Sa‘īd says, ‘Umar, while performing ritual ablution, wiped his head and feet three times and said, “This is how the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform ritual ablution (*wuzū*).’[5]

4- Jamrān bin A’bān, ‘Uthmān’s slave, transmits from his master, ‘After washing the face and the hands, the Noble Prophet (s) used to wipe a part of his head and feet.”’[6]

5- ‘Abdullah bin Zayd Māzani, well known as Ibn ‘Amārah, says, ‘While performing ritual ablution, the Noble Prophet (s) wiped a part of his head and his feet.’[7]

6- ‘Abdullah bin Abbās always used to say, ‘Ritual ablution consists of washing [the face and the hands] and wiping [a part of the head and the feet].’[8]

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1. Musnad Ahmad, 1/153/ Hadīth no. 739; and /183/ Hadīth no. 91.
2. That is, the Sea of Knowledge.
3. Tathkirah al-Huffaz, 1/124.
4. Tafsīr Tabari, 6/82.
5. Musnad Ahmad, 1/109/ Hadīth no. 489.
6. Kanz al-‘Ummal, 9/ 436/ Hadīth no. 26863.
7. Kanz al-‘Ummal, 9/ 451, Hadith no.26922
8. Tafsīr Tabari, 6/82.

7- ‘Āmir al-Sha‘bi says, ‘Ritual ablution consists of washing [the face and the hands] and wiping [a part of the head and the feet]. That is why we perform *tayammam*[1], which is a substitute of *wuzū,* on the parts that are supposed to be washed in *wuzū* and the parts that are supposed to be wiped in *tayammam* have been annulled.’[2]

8- Rifā‘ah bin Rafi’, one of the companions of the Prophet of Allah, narrates that the Noble Messenger (s) used to wipe a part of his head and his feet when performing ritual ablution.[3]

9- Abū Mālik Ash‘ari, one of the Noble Prophet’s (s) companions, taught his family how to perform ritual ablution, during which he wiped a part of his head and his feet.[4]

10- Rifā‘ah bin Rafi’, one of the Noble Prophet’s (s) companions, transmits from his holiness [the Messenger of Allah (s)], ‘The prayers of none of you are acceptable until you perform complete ablution; wash your faces and your hands and wipe a part of your heads and your feet.’[5]

Amongst the many companions of the Noble Prophet (s) and their immediate successors [in regard to ritual ablution], we have deemed it sufficient to mention only ten people who transmitted that the Noble Prophet (s), his eminent companions and their immediate successors used

1. That is, ablution with dust or sand instead of water and in place of wuzū.
2. Tafsīr Tabari, 6/82.
3. Sunan ibn Mājah, /1/ Hadīth no. 460; Sunan Nisā’i, 2/226.
4. Musnad Ahmad, 5/342.
5. Mustadrak Hākim, 1/241.

to wipe their heads and feet. These people and their recounts have been recorded in volume one, pages 56-95 of the book entitled ‘Al-Insāf fi Masā’il Dām fihā al-Khalāf’.

3- 'Hayyā alā khayr al-'amal' in the Call to Prayer (Athān)

Question: Why do Shiites add the phrase '*hayyā alā khayr al-'amal*'[1] when reciting the *athān*[2] and the *iqāmah*[3]?

Response: The phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-'amal* is recited twice after reciting the phrase '*hayyā alā al-falāh*' in the call to prayer (*athān*) that is recited by the Shiites. In the Hadīths of the Imāms of the Noble Prophet's descent ('a), this phrase has been considered as part of the call to prayer (*athān*) whereas this sentence is not included in the current Sunni call to prayer (*athān*). We now have to find out where this difference arises from and how this phrase has been erased from the call to prayer (*athān*).

We have to say that during the reign of the second caliph, expedient consideration of public interests and the common good was very prevalent and most often expedient consideration of public interest and the common good took precedence over Allah's commands, the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

For instance, during the era of the Noble Prophet (s) and that of the first caliph, and even some part of the reign of the second caliph, three pronunciations of the divorce

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1. That is, hurry to perform the best of deeds.
2. That is, the call to prayer.
3. That is, the formal introduction to prayer that is recited inside the Mosque just before the prayer.

formula or phrase in one session was considered as only one divorce but in the second century AH this injunction was changed and pronouncing the divorce formula thrice during one session came to be considered as three real divorces and the husband was deprived of any right of revocation of divorce.[1]

In the course of the discussion, we will prove that cancellation of the phrase ‘*hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal*’ from the text of the call to prayer (*athān*) took place during the reign of the second caliph.

Examination of the history of the call to prayer (*athān*) clearly proves that the sentence ‘*hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal*’ was one of the definite parts of the call to prayer (*athān*) and that during the era of the Noble Prophet (s) and even for some time after his sad demise, reciters of the *athān* used to recite this phrase as part of the call to prayer (*athān*). Thereafter, for one reason or another, it was cancelled from the text of the call to prayer (*athān*).

1- Seyyid Murtazā says, ‘Sunni scholars have narrated that for some years during the era of the Noble Prophet’s divine mission, the sentence ‘*hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal*’ used to be recited as part of the call to prayer (*athān*), but it later got abrogated.’[2]

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1. Study the interpretation of this part in the book Al-‘Itisām bil Kitāb wa Sunnah, /175-210 and in regard to this issue, there is consensus of opinion among historians and scholars of Hadīth; refer to Sahīh Muslim, 4/ bāb talāq thalāth, Hadīths no. 1 and 3; Sunan Bayhaghi, 7/329; al-Durr al-Manthūr, 1/279.
2. Al-Intisār, /137/ bāb wujūb qawl hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal.

2- In Al-Futūhāt al-Makīyyah[1], Ibn ‘Arabi says, ‘During the war of Khandaq, the companinions of the Noble Prophet (s) were digging the ditch of Khandaq when prayer time approached and one of them called out, “*Hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal*.” From then on, it became a praiseworthy deed.’[2]

3- In the book entitled *al-Raūz al-Nazīr*, Sharraf al-Dīn, well known as Sayyāqi (d. 1221 AH), says, ‘The truth is that the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal* was a part of the call to prayer (*athān*) when it was legislated, in addition to the fact that there is consensus that it was part and parcel of the *athān* day of the war of *khandaq*.[3]

Now we will adduce some Hadīths in this regard:

1- In [the book entitled] *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, Muttaqi Hindī thus quotes from Mu‘jam Tabrāni, ‘Bilāl used to recite the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal* when reciting the morning call to prayer (*athān subh*).’[4]

2- In his article entitled ‘*Al- Athān bi hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal’* Hāfiz ‘Alawī Zaydī (367-445 AH) quotes through a chain of transmission from Abī Mahzūrah, one of the Noble Prophet’s (s) companions, that the Messenger of Allah had taught him how to recite the call to prayer

1. That is, the Meccan revelations or openings.
2. Al-Futūhāt al-Makīyyah, 1/400.
3. Hāfiz ‘Alawī in Kitāb al-Athān bi hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal, /91.
4. Kanz al-‘Ummal, /342/ Hadīth no. 23174.

(*athān*) one of whose sentences was *hayyā alā khayr al-'amal*.[1]

There is consensus among biographers that the Noble Prophet (s) taught him (Abī Mahzūrah) to recite the call to prayer (*athān*) in this way after returning from the battle of Hunayn[2], and this battle took place towards the end of the eighth year AH after the conquest of Meccah. This indicates that this phrase was part and parcel of the call to prayer (*athān*) up to that time.

These two examples of Hadīths are indicative of the fact that this phrase was part and parcel of the call to prayer (*athān*) during the era of the Noble Prophet (s).

In two very academic research articles written by two Zaydī scholars by the names of *Al-Athān bi hayyā alā khayr al-'amal* authored by Hāfiz 'Alawī Zaidī and *Al-Itisām bihabl Allah* authored by al-Imām Qāsim bin Muhammad al-Zaydi, prominent companions of the Noble prophet (s) and their immediate successors all used to recite the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-'amal* in their *athān* and the *iqāmah*[3]. Mentioning their names and recounting their statements calls for a lot of space [and prolongs the discussion]. However, those interested may refer to the above mentioned books.

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1. Al- Athān bi hayyā alā khayr al-'amal, /26, 27 and 29; Al-Itisām bihabl Allah authored by al-Imām Qāsim bin Muhammad al-Zaydi died in 1029, printed by al-Jami'yah printing house, Amman.
2. Musnad Ahmad, 3/408.
3. That is, the formal introduction to a daily prayer that is made inside the Mosque summoning people to stand up and prayer.

Therefore, not the least doubt should be harboured regarding the legality of this part of the *athān*. In reality, the people who cancelled this part of the phrase from the *athān* have to explain why they did so. Unfortuantely, this cancellation had no other reason save consideration of public interest and the common good.

In the book entitled *Al- Athān bi hayyā alā khayr al-'amal*, Hāfiz 'Alawī recounts according to a chain of transmission from Hassan bin Yahyā bin al-Husayn bin Zayd bin 'Alī that the descendants of Allah's Prophet (s) have consensus that *hayyā alā khayr al-'amal* is a part of the *athān* and that during the era of Abū Bakr, *mua'zins*[1] used to recite this phrase as a part of the call to prayer (*athān*) but when 'Umar got the reigns of power, he said, 'Stop reciting the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-'amal* (hurry to perform the best of deeds) in the call to prayer (*athān*) so that people may not quit going to engage in holy war (*jihād*) on the pretext that prayer is the best of deeds.'[2] He ('Umar) was the first person to cancel this phrase from the call to prayer (*athān*).

In [the book entitled] *Sharh Maqāsid*, the renowned researcher Sa'd al-Dīn Taftāzāni (712- 779 AH) and the famous theologian Ash'ari, well known by the name of 'Alā' al-Dīn Qūshaji (d. 879 AH), say, ''Umar bin Khattāb warned against three things when he said, "Three things were prevalent [and permissible] during the era of the Noble Prophet (s) but I prohibit them, and I will

1. The one who recites the call to prayer (the athān) is called a Mua'zin.
2. Al- Athān bi hayyā alā khayr al-'amal, /29.

punish whoever does them; the first is mut‘ah[1] of women, the second is mut‘ah of the hajj and the third is reciting the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal*.

The caliph’s consideration of public interest and the common good, despite being a kind of independent reasoning and judgement that is opposed to clear injunctions and texts, can only be authoritative for himself and not for anyone else, not even for future generations. If future generations become aware of the truth, they have to consider the Sunnah as prior to *bid‘ah*[2]. In addition to this, the criterion has changed and there is no longer holy war against disbelief (*kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*). Because it was not easy to institutionalize and establish such *bid‘ah*, not so many people believed in this prohibition and thus continued to recite the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal* in the call to prayer (*athān*).

In his biographical work, Burhān al-Dīn Halabi (975-1044 AH) writes, ‘In the call to prayer (*athān*), ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar and ‘Alī bin al-Husayn used to recite the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal* after reciting the phrase *hayyā ‘alā al-falāh*.’[3] During the entire history [of Islām], people

1. Mut‘ah literary means enjoyment, and the term Mut‘ah al-Nisā technically means temporary marriage and Mut‘ah al-Hajj means the period when a husaband and wife are permitted to have sexual intercourse once they have come out of the state of ihrām during the rites of the hajj. For more information in this regard, refer to Shiite books of jurisprudence.
2. That is, heretical or blameworthy innovation in religion and religious practices.
3. Sirat Halabi, 2/305.

in opposing camps used to recite this phrase because it was a motto of defiance, disagreement and opposition.

During the uprising of the Hassanids, when Husayn bin ‘Alī bin Hassan became triumphant and dominant over the city of Medīnah, ‘Abdullah bin Hassan Aftas went on top of the minaret which had been built on top of the Noble Prophet’s (s) mausoleum, he told the Mua’zzin, ‘Say, “*hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal”.* The Mua’zzin did as ordered.”’[1]

Also, the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal* was the motto of the Shiites of Baghdād during the reign of Āl-i Būwīyah. Āl-i Būwīyah had inclinations to Shiism. When the Saljūqis ascended to power, they forbade reciting this phrase and what is surprising is that they gave orders that the phrase *al-salāt khayr min al-Nawm* (prayer is better than sleep) should be recited during the morning call to prayer. This took place in the year 448 AH.[2]

1. Maqātil al-Tālibīn, written by Abū al-Faraj Isfahāni (284-356 AH), /446, printed by D ār al-Ma‘rifah.
2. Sīrat Halabi, 2/305.

4- Bearing Witness to the Guardianship of ‘Alī (‘a)

Question: Why do Shiites bear witness to the guardianship of ‘Alī (‘a) in their call to prayer (*athān*)?

Response: In their call to prayer, Shiites bear witness to the guardianship of ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a) after bearing witness to the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah (s). This is [done and] witnessed in all Shiite lands. It is necessary to explain a number of points in this regard:

1- All Shiite jurists (*fuqahā*) have consensus of opinion that the second *shahādah*[1] is not a part of the call to prayer (*athān*). That is why when enumerating the constituents of the call to prayer (*athān*), they do not count more than eighteen parts, which are:

Four *takbirs* (magnifying God by saying the phrase ‘Allahu Akbar’), two testimonies on the unity or oneness of Allah, two testimonies on the prophethood of Allah’s Messenger (s), two recitations of the phrase *hayyā ‘alā al-salāt*, two recitations of the phrase *hayyā alā al-falāh*, two recitations of the phrase *hayyā alā khayr al-‘amal,* two takbirs and lastly two tahlils (praising Allah by saying la

1. That is, bearing witness to, or testifying to the guardianship of ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib (‘a).

ilaha illallah[1]). This is what is agreed upon by all Shiite jurists.

2- The one who recites the third *shahādah* as a part of the call to prayer (*athān*) has committed a forbidden deed and has thus sinned.

3- Reciting the third shahādah in the call to prayer (*athān*) without intending it as a part of the *athān* is either permissible (*jā'iz*) and/ or recommendable (*mustahab*), and this permissibility has two bases or principles:

A- According to the orders of the Holy Qur'ān and the Noble Prophet's (s) Hadīth, 'Alī ('a) is the friend of Allah.

B- Imām Sādiq ('a) said, 'Bear witness to the guardianship of 'Alī ('a) whenever you bear witness to the guardianship of the Noble Prophet (s).'

To prove the first principle that 'Alī ('a) is the friend of Allah, besides the recurrently transmitted Hadīth of Ghadīr and the other recurrently transmitted traditions which state that the Noble Prophet (s) used to repeatedly say, 'O 'Alī! You are the guardian of all the Muslims'[2], the Holy Qur'ān also explicitly declares the guardianship of 'Alī ('a) when it states:

'*Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give zakāt while bowing down.*

1. That is, there is no god but Allah.
2. Kanz al-'Ummal, 6/396/ Hadīth no. 6048.

Whoever takes for his guardians Allah, His Apostle and the faithful [should know that] the confederates of Allah are indeed the victorious.’[1]

Exegets have consensus of opinion that the reason of this verse’s revelation was ‘Alī (‘a). This took place when a poor man entered into the Mosque and asked for help from the people therein. His holiness Imām ‘Alī (‘a), who was in state of *rukū‘* (bowing down), made a sign with his finger to the poor man to come forward and remove the ring that was on his finger. It then the two aforementioned verses were sent down.

There is more evidence to prove the reason of revelation of this Hadīth than can be adduced here, but we will cite a few examples in this regard in the footnotes.[2]

Thus, taking the above quoted verse and the other verses and traditions into consideration, it becomes clear that Allah appointed Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) as the guardian and leader of the believers.

In regard to the second point as well, Qāsim bin Mu‘āwīyah has transmitted from the companions of Imām Sādiq (‘a) and Imām Kāzim (‘a) that they said, ‘Whoever bears witness to the unity of Allah and the prophethood of

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1. *Sūrat al-Mā’idah (The Table):* 55-56.

2. Tafsīr Tabari, 6/86; Abū Bakr Jassās, Ahkām al-Qur’ān, 2/542; Abū al-Hassan Wāhidi Nishābūri in Asbāb al-Nuzūl, /148; Zamkhashari in Kashshaf, 1/422 and the late ‘Allāmah Amīni has recounted from 66 sources that this verse was revealed for ‘Alī bin Abī Tālib (‘a); even Hassan bin Thābit, who was present at the time of revelation of this verse, recited a few couplets of poetry in this regard.

the Noble Prophet (s) should complete the *shahādah* by bearing witness to the guardianship of ‘Alī (‘a).’[1]

According to what has been said, none of the Shiites recites the third *shahādah* as a part of the *athān*, and in the iqāmah, some people separate it from the rest of the parts by reciting it only once, whereas all the other parts are recited twice. In this case, no problem arises.

1. IIhtijāj Tabarsi, /83.

5- Shiites and Praying with Open Arms

Question: Why do Shiites pray with open arms?

Response: Placing the right hand on top of the left hand when performing prayer (praying with closed hands) is one of the issues whose desirability among jurists of three of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*mathāhib fiqhi*):

The Hanafis say that placing one hand over the other during prayer is a tradition which is not *wājib* (obligatory). It is better for a man to place the palm of his right hand over the back of his left hand and place the thus closed hands under the navel and it is better for a woman to place her closed hands on her chest.

The Shāfi'is say that placing one hand over the other is a tradition for both men and women and it is better to place the right hand over the left and place the closed hands under the chest and over the navel.

The Hanbalis say that placing one hand over the other is a tradition and and it is better to place the right hand over the left and place the closed hands under the navel.

The Māliki sect, contrary to what the above mentioned sects assert, says that hanging one hand over the other is recommendable in wājib (*obligatory*) prayers. There were some people who said this before the Mālikis, whose names are: ʻAbdullah bin Zubayr, Saʻīd bin Musayyib,

Sa'īd bin Jubayr, 'Atā' bin Jurayh, Nakha'ī, Hassan Basri, Ibn Sīrīn and some other jurists.

It has been recounted that Imām Aūzā'ī said that the one performing prayer is at liberty to either place one hand over the other or to hang one hand over the other.[1]

But what is generally and widely accepted among the Imamate Shiites is that placing one hand over the other during prayer is harām (forbidden) and nullifies the prayer, and gradually some Shiite jurists came to believe in the abhorrence of placing one hand over the other, such as Abū al-Salāh Halabi in Kāfi.[2]

The Method in which the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform His Prayer

Despite that besides the Mālikis, the other Sunni schools of jurisprudence have permitted placing the left hand over the right one during prayer and despite that they have had thorough discussions regarding this matter, there is still no convincing proof for this permissibility, or for its desirability. On the contrary, it can be [rightfully] argued that there are proofs opposing their claims, and [in fact] there are Hadīths from both the Shiite and Sunni sects which demonstrate the method in which the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform his prayers. In these Hadīths, there is not the least mention that the Messenger of Allah used to place his hands one over the other and there is no possibility that the Noble Prophet (s) could have forsaken

1. Muhammad Jawād Mughniyah, al-Fiqh 'alā al-Mathāhib al-Khamsah, /110.
2. Muhammad Hassan Najafi, Jawāhir al-Kalām, 11/15-16.

to perform a desirable deed in his entire life or during some part of his lifetime. We will now adduce three examples of these traditions, two of which have been transmitted by the Sunnis and one of which has been transmitted by the Shiites. All these traditions explain the way in which the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform his prayers, and there is not the least hint in them that he used to place his hands one over the other.

1- The Hadīth of Abī Humaid Sa'idi

The Hadīth of Abī Humaid Sa'idi has been transmitted by some Sunni scholars of tradition, and we quote it from the book entitled Sunan Bayhaghi. Abī Humaid Sa'idi addressed the companions of the Noble Prophet (s), 'I know more than anyone of you how the Noble Prophet (s) used to pray.' They (the companions of the Noble Prophet(s)) asked him, 'Why do you claim so? Neither did you precede us in following the Messenger of Allah (s) nor did you accompany him more than we did.' He said, 'Why [not]?' They said, 'Then show us how the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform his prayers. Abī Humaid Sa'idi said, 'Whenever the Noble Prophet (s) intended to perform prayer, he used to raise his hands up to his shoulders and say, "*Allahu Akbar*". He would begin reciting the Holy Qur'ān when all his body parts were in a state of equilibrium. Then he would again say "*Allahu Akbar*" and perform the bowing position (*rukū'*), in which he would place both his hands on his knees and place his head in a state of equilibrium, in such a way that he neither was looking up nor down. Thereafter, he would rise from the state of bowing down (*rukū'*) and stand

upright [again], and say, "*Sama' Allahu liman hamdah*"[1]. Then he would raise his hands up to his shoulders and say, "*Allahu Akbar*", and perform the prostration (*sajdah*) with his palms touching the ground while his hands were separated from the shoulders and with his toes open. Then he would raise his head from prostration (*sajdah*) and sit on his folded legs while every part of his body was in equilibrium. He would perform the next rak'at in the same way up to the last prostration, after which he would say the *salām*.'

Everyone said Abū Humayd had said the truth, the Messenger of Allah (s) used to perform his prayer in this manner.[2]

This was one Hadīth explaining the method in which the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform his prayer as has been transmitted through Sunni channels of transmission. We will now adduce a Hadīth that has been transmitted by Shiite sources:

2- The Hadīth of Hammād bin 'Īssā

Hammād bin 'Īssā has transmitted a Hadīth from Imām Ja'far Sādiq ('a) in which his holiness ('a) said, 'How reprehensible it is that a man should have lived sixty or seventy years without having performed [even] one prayer by observing its proper rules [and etiquettes].' Hammād bin 'Īssā says that these words made him feel humbled and so I asked, 'May I be thy ransom. Teach me how to

1. That is, Allah hears the one who praises him.
2. Sunan Bayhaghi, 2/72, 73, 101, 102; Sunan Abi Dāwud, 1/194/ bāb Iftitāh al-Salāt, Hadīths no. 730-736; Sunan Tirmithi, 2/98/ bāb sifat al-Salāt.

perform the prayer while observing its proper rules and etiquettes.'

At my request, Abū 'Abdullah (Ja'far bin Muhammad) stood upright and faced the Qibla, and placed his hands (with closed finger) on his thighs, and placed his legs close to together separated by a distance of a three toes. All the toes of his legs were facing the direction of the Qibla without the least deviation. He was in a state of perfect humility when he said the *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) and afterwhich he recited *Sūrat Hamd* and *Sūrat al-Ikhlās* in a slow melodic tone. Then he remained in the standing position (*qiyām*) for a short while before bowing down (*rukū'*) with his hands on his knees, which were stretched towards the back. His back was so straight that if a drop of water or oil was poured on it, it would not have droped to any direction because of the straightness of the back. The Imām's neck in the bowing position (*rukū'*) was straight and his eyes were closed and three times he slowly and melodiously recited Allah's praises (*subhana rabbi al-athīm wa bi hamdi*), thereafter he stood upright and when he was completely upright, said, '*Sami Allahu liman hamidah*' and after that, while still in the standing position (*qiyām*), recited the *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) with his hands raised high besides his face and then went into prostration (*sajda*) and placed his hands on the ground before his knees [touched the ground] and three times said, '*Subhana rabbi al-'alā wa bihamdi*'. While in prostration, he did not place one part of his body on top of another and he had placed eight parts of his body on the ground: the forehead, two palms of his hand, two knees, two big toes and the nose. Placing seven parts of the body on the ground during prostration is wājib and placing the nose on the

ground (clay) is desirable. Then after that, he raised his head from prostration and when he was sitting upright, he recited the *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) and bended the foreleg of his left leg, sat on it and placed the back part of his right leg on top of his left leg and said, '*Astaghfir Allaha rabbī wa 'atūbu 'ilaih*, and then performed the second prostration in the same way that he had performed the first one, and recited the same invocation (*dhikr*) which he had recited in the first prostration. In all these positions (*qiyām*, *rukū' and sajdah*), no part of his body rested on another part. In *sajda* (prostration), his hands were separated from his body like wings and he had placed his forearm on the ground. Thus, he performed two rak'ats of the prayer.

[When he had finished], he said, 'O Hammād! Perform your prayers in this manner, and do not lean to any direction in prayer, and do not play with your hands and fingers during prayer, and do not spit saliva either to your right or left direction, or in front of you.'[1]

As can be observed, both traditions intend to explain the method of the obligatory (*wājib*) prayer and in none of these traditions is there the least hint that one hand has to be placed on top of the other. If doing this was a part of the Sunnah, Imām Sādiq ('a) would not have forsaken it. His holiness practically showed how the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform his prayers, because he learnt this method [of performing prayer] from his father Imām Bāqir ('a) and Imām Bāqir learnt it from his forefathers who had

1. Shaykh Hurr 'Āmili, Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, 4/ bāb 1 from the bābs of the deeds of the prayer/ Hadīth no. 1, and bāb 17/ Hadīth no. 1 and 2.

learnt it from Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) and Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) had learnt it from the Messenger of Allah (s). Therefore, placing one hand over the other during prayer is an innovation in religion not based on the the Qur'ān or the Sunnah, for the reason that folding arms during prayer is [tantamount to] introducing something in the Shari'ah that has [previously] not been a part of it.

3- Teaching Prayer to a Person who never used to perform it properly

There is a Hadīth among the Sunni scholars of tradition called '*Hadīth al-Musi' Salātuhu*', that is to say, the Hadīth of a person who never used to perform his prayers properly. Thus is the Hadīth:

Abū Hureira says, 'The Noble Prophet (s) entered the Mosque and another man entered the Mosque after him. Then he performed the prayer and after that came to the Messenger of Allah (s) and greeted him. The Noble Prophet (s) responded to his greetings and said, "Go back and repeat your prayers." He returned and performed his prayer once more and again went to the Messenger of Allah (s). The Noble Prophet (s) again said, "Go back and repeat your prayers." This was repeated three times. Finally, that man said, "I swear upon Allah who delegated you to the prophetic mission that I do not know how to perform the prayer any better than I have already done. Please teach me how to pray." Then the Noble Prophet (s) said, "When you stand up to pray, recite the *Takbir (Allahu Akbar)*. Thereafter, recite what you know from the Holy Qur'ān, and then bow down (*rukū'*) in such a way that your body is at ease and in equilibrium." The Messenger of Allah (s) taught him the elements, rules and

disciplines of the prayer.[1] There is not the least hint [in this Hadīth] that the Noble Prophet (s) ordered this man to fold his arms, whereas he would not have forsaken mentioning this if it were a *wājib* (obligatory) and/ or emphatically recommended deed.

The Opinion of the Imāms (‘a) of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

Taking what has been said into considerartion, it has become clear that it has not been proved that folding arms during prayer is a part of the Sunnah. It is for this reason that we see the Imāms (‘a) of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) used to protest against this deed and used to consider this deed as a Magian practice and sign of respect for their kings.

Muhammad bin Muslim has transmitted that he had asked either Imām Sādiq (‘a) or Imām Bāqir (‘a). ‘What is the verdict of a person who folds his arms when performing the prayer?’ He was told, ‘This deed is irreligious and ought not to be done.’

Zurārah transmits that Imām Bāqir (‘a) said, ‘Be attentive in your prayer and do not be irreligious (i.e do not fold your hands when performing the prayer) because this is what the Magians do.’

Shaykh Sadūq (‘a) recounts through a chain of transmission that Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) said, ‘Muslims do not fold their hands when performing the

1. Sahīh Bukhāri, 1/189/ Hadīth no. 793; Sahīh Muslim, 2/11.

prayer and do not imitate the unbelievers[1] when they stand in the presence of Allah.'[2]

Finally, we have to mention that Dr. 'Alī Sālūs has recounted the opinions and fatwas[3] of both the Sunnis and Shiites regarding the folding of arms when praying. After that, he has attacked those who consider folding arms during prayer as *harām* (prohibited), saying, 'People who believe, as a result of religious fanaticism, that folding arms during prayer is harām and nullifies the prayer, create disunity and schisms among Muslims.'[4]

It is proper to ask him what wrong the Shiiites have committed. After careful study and research in the Book and the Sunnah, they have come to the conclusion that folding arms during prayer is a matter that was innovated after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s), and the people were ordered to carry it out during the era of the caliphs. In this case, whoever imagines that this deed is a part of the prayer, whether as a *wājib* (obligatory) or a *mustahab* (recommended), has introduced an innovation in religion which was previously not a part of it. Does one, who has carried out research and study in the Book and the Sunnah and has discovered the truth that folding arms during prayer is an innovation, have to be accused of

1. That is, the Magians.
2. Shaykh Hurr 'Āmili, Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, 4/ bāb 15 from the bābs of qawāti' al-Salāt, Hadīths no. 1, 2 and 7.
3. That is, a religious juridical decree passed by a Muslim legal expert (Mujtahid).
4. Fiqh al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyah mawāzi' al-Ikhtilāf bainahu wa bain al-Mathahib al-Arba'ah, /183.

religious fanaticism and creating disunity among Muslims?

If this accusation were true, then Imām Mālik also has to be accused in the same way because he considers folding arms during the obligatory (*wājib*) prayers as *makrūh*[1]. Can he also be accused of religious fanaticism?

Why don't you consider folding arms during prayer as a sign of religious fanaticism and a cause of disunity among Muslims? You ought to judge yourselves.

1. That is, an abominable act.

6- Prostration on a Piece of Clay

Question: Why do the Imamate Shiites prostrate on a piece of clay during prayer?

Response: From the viewpoint of the Divine Law of Islām, it is only Allah who deserves to be prostrated for and it is only for Him that prostration is permitted. It is not permitted to prostrate for any other than Him, and this is something that is unanimously agreed upon by all Muslim jurists.

If there are differences of opinion, they are related to other issues such as the things on which one can prostrate from the viewpoint of Shiites:

1- Earth, such as clay and stone and the likes of these two.

2- Something that grows from the ground, on the condition that it is not wearable and eatable.

From the Sunni point of view, the scope of jurisdiction is wider; they believe that it is permissible to prostrate on such fabrics as wool, cotton and hair. It is only Shāfi'ī who says that it is not permissible to prostrate on cloth.[1]

Now we have to find out which one of the two opinions is approved by the Noble Prophet's (s) words and deeds. Without the least doubt, the Noble Prophet (s), according

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1. Khalāf Shaykh Tūsi, 1/357-358, issue no. 112, 113 and other sources.

to the Holy Qur'ān, is the best role model and an ideal paradigm, and no one can prefer his opinion to the words and deeds of the Messenger of Allah (s). Study of Islāmic Hadīths that have been recorded in authentic books of tradition proves that the final injunction concerning the place of prostration was explained in three stages:

In the first stage, only prostration on earth was legislated and prostration on other than that was not permissible, and no matter how the Noble Prophet's (s) companions complained about the hotness of the gravel stones of the Mosque, the Eminent Messenger (s) did not pay heed to their complaints. Even when someone prostrated on the sleeve of their shirts, the Messenger of Allah (s) would pull the shirt sleeve from under their forehead and repeatedly say, 'Place your foreheads on the ground and thus soil it.'

Because of the obligation to prostrate on earth, the companions of the Noble Prophet (s) used to avoid the heat of the gravel stones by picking a few stones from the ground and keeping them in their hands so that they may be cool when it was time for prostration.

During this stage, only prostration on the earth in a natural way was permissible.

During the second stage, according to the common good, prostrating on straw mat was legislated, and we all know that straw mat is a plant [that grows from the earth].

During the third stage, it was permitted to prostrate on a turban or anything like that if the heat was so intense that it made prostrating on the earth impossible. In other than this case, it was not permitted to prostrate on turbans.

These are the three stages of legeislation in regard to prostration.

The Philosophy of Prostrating on Earth in the Sayings of the Noble Prophet (s)

The point that is worth mentioning is that the Noble Prophet (s) has explained the philososphy of prostrating on earth in a Hadīth and has clearly said that the secret of Islāmic legislation that prostration ought to be done on earth has an instructional aspect. The Noble Prophet (s) stated:

'Place your foreheads and noses on the earth whenever you prostrate so that your humility and lowliness may become apparent.'[1]

Hishām bin Hakam asked Imām Sādiq ('a) to explain the philosophy of prostrating on earth. The Imām responded, 'It is not good to prostrate on edibles and wearables when praying because prostration denotes humility and lowliness vis-à-vis Allah, and also for the reason that edibles and wearables are idols of worship for Mammonists whereas prostration on the earth and the ground is the highest and best manifestation of humility and lowliness vis-à-vis Allah.[2]

For the reason that prostration on earth is the perfection of servitude and the manifestation of humility, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not consider prostrating on earth as

1. Nihāyah ibn Athīr, 2, madah ragham.
2. Bihār al-Anwār, 82/147/ bāb ma yasih al-sujūd alaih.

enough, but would place a bit of clay on the straw mat and prostrate on it.[1]

Also, ‘Azwah bin Zubayr never used to prostrate on anything other than earth.[2]

Masrūq, one of the immediate successors of the Noble Prophet’s (s) companions, used to carry earth dried in the form of a block so that he may prostrate on it in the ship.[3]

Ibn Abi Shībah and Shaykh Bukhāri say, ‘Praying on carpets is a new thing, and it has been recounted on an authentic chain of transmission that the Noble Prophet (s) said that the worst of deeds is introducing new things in religion because every new thing is an innovation.’[4]

Prostrating on Hardened Clay from Karbala, the Land of Imām Husayn’s Martyrdom and Burial

Here, the question that is put forward is: Why have Shiites, of all places in the world, chosen to prostrate on hardened clay from Karbala, and why do they keep it in their Mosques and houses and/ or carry it with themselves when traveling?

Response: The response to this question is clear. The place of prostration has to be free of any impurity. It is not possible to always find a pure place for prostration, so Shiites follow the example of Masrūq bin Ajda, the great immediate successor of the Noble Prophet’s (s)

1. Fath al-Bāri, 1/ 410; Sharh al-Uhuzi, 1/272.
2. Ibid.
3. Tabaqāt Kubrā, 6/79, Beirut print.
4. Al-Musnnif, 2.

companions, in carrying a dried piece of clay to prostrate on earth wherever they may be, even when they are traveling [on a journey]. And they do *tayammum* (ablution with dust or sand) on it if there arises any need for *tayammum*. But why have they preferred and chosen to prostrate on hardened clay from Karbala? The reason is that when the one performing prayer, places one's forehead on that holy piece of clay, he is compelled to remember the sacrifices of that peerless great man from the household of the Noble Prophet (s). He, who sacrificed his life, possessions and children for Islām, and did not submit to oppression and tyranny, and taught mankind how to attain true freedom and liberty.

Prostration on hardened clay from Karbala does not only exclude one from the realm of monotheism, but also adds sincerity to his prostration and makes him ready to make sacrifices in the way of religion, one of which is prayer.

'Alī bin 'Abdullah bin Abbās, one of the immediate successors of the Noble Prophet's (s) companions, wrote to Razīn, 'Send me a piece of stone from mount Marwah so that I may prostrate on it.'[1] The reason for this is that mount Marwa was the scene of the sacrifices of a woman of faith who ran seven times between two mountains and underwent lots of hardships in order to secure water.

Shaikh Tūsi relates on his own chain of tradition from Mu'āwiya bin 'Ammār that Imām Sādiq ('a) had a small orange bag in which he used to keep a number of hardened pieces of clay from Karbala, the land of Imām Husayn's ('a) martyrdom and burial. He used to spread

1. Akhbār Mecca, authored by Azraqi, 3/151.

them on his prayer mat and prostrate on them during prayer.[1]

People who construe prostration on a hardened piece of clay from Karbala as a kind of worshiping a man have failed to discern the difference between ‘for whom to prostrate’ and ‘on what to prostrtate’. In all states, prostration is a prerequisite of Allah. For Him do we prostrate, and what we place our forheads on during prostration can be clay, a mat, or a stone from Medīna or from Marwah.

1. Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah, 3/608/ bāb 16 from the bābs of mā yasuhhu ‘alayh al-Sujūd.

7- Combining Two Prayers

Question: Why do Shiites perform the five daily prayers three times?

Response: The issue of combining two prayers is one of the most important and sensitive issues of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) which has lately been the subject of discussion and study by Shiite scholars and researchers. The reason is because some people imagine that combining two prayers entails praying at a time which is not correct from the viewpoint of Islāmic law. In order for this topic to become clear, it is better to mention a few points first:[1]

1- All Islāmic groups have a consensus of opinion that the noon (*zuhr*) and afternoon (*'asr*) prayers can be performed one after another and without any spacing at 'Arafāt, and that it is permissible to perform the evening (*maghrib*) and night (*'ishā*) prayers together at Muzdalifah.

2- The Hanafis say, 'Combining the noon and afternoon prayers and the evening and night prayers is only permissible in two places, 'Arafah and Muzdalifah.

3- The Hanbalis, Mālikis, Shāfis say, 'Besides the aforementioned particular places, combining the noon and

1. There are lots of valuable articles that have been written in regard to combining two prayers; such articles as Rasā'il Fiqhiyyah by 'Allāma Sharaf al-Dīn 'Āmilī and al-Jam' bayn al-Salātain by Najm al-Dīn 'Askarī.

afternoon prayers as well as the evening and night prayers is also permissible during journeys.' Some of these groups consider as permissible combining two prayers in some special instances, such as when it is raining or when one is sick or is afraid of an enemy.

4- Shiites hold that every one of the prayers, noon and afternnon as well as the evening and night prayers, have both a particular and joint time.

A- The particular time of the noon prayers begins from mid-day until the time that the four rakats of the noon prayers are finished. Only the noon prayer can be performed during this specific and restricted time.

B- The particular time for the afternoon prayer begins the moment that the noon prayer is finished and ends at sunset. During this specific time, only the afternoon prayer can be performed.

C- The joint time for the noon and afternoon prayer is at the end of the specified time for noon prayer and at the beginning of the specified time for the afternoon prayer. Shiites assert that the noon and afternoon prayers can be performed one after another without any spacing as regards time.

The Sunnis, because of their particular viewpoint regarding the division of time (from mid-day to sunset), do not believe in the existence of a joint time for the noon and afternoon prayers. They hold that the particular time for the noon prayer begins from mid-day to a certain length of the shadow, and that it is not permissible at all to perform the afternoon prayers during this time. The time for the afternoon prayers begins after that and ends at

sunset, and thus the afternoon prayer can not be performed outside the confines of this time. With this kind of viewpoint, the two prayers can not be combined at all because this necessitates performing one of the prayers at other than its prescribed time.

Shiites believe that this kind of division pertains to the time when performing each one of the prayers has more divine reward.

Also, there are a lot of Hadīths which indicate that the Prophet of Allah (s) used to combine his prayers during journeys and sometimes when he was at home, without having the least excuse. Sunnis have been compelled to interpret these Hadīths in a very improbable manner in order to protect and justify their standpoint in regard to the division of the times of prayer. Consider the following Shiite and Sunni interpretations of these Hadīths:

1- Shiites maintain that on the basis of these Hadīths, it is permissible to perform the afternoon prayers after immediately finishing the noon prayers and it is likewise permissible to perform the night prayers immediately after the evening prayers. This is not dependent on a particular time, place or conditions. It is permissible everytime and everywhere.

2- The Sunnis hold that because there is no joint time for performing both prayers, the noon prayers have to be performed at the end of its prescribed time and the afternoon prayers have to be performed at the beginning of its prescribed time.

The baselessness of this interpretation becomes clear once we delve deeper into the philosophy of combining the two

prayers, because the reason for permitting combining prayers is to make the discharge of religious duties easy for the Islāmic community so that Muslims may be able to easily perform their prayers in all conditions.

But if we divide the time of prayer according to the Sunni viewpoint, and assert that the Noble Prophet (s) used to perform his noon prayers at the end of its prescribed time and the afternoon prayers immediate after it at the beginning of the time prescribed for the afternoon prayers, we will actually be making things a lot difficult and not any easier because distinguishing the end and the beginning of the noon and the afternoon prayers is not easy in all places of the world, especially in places where they do not have apparatuses for telling prayer times.

8- Taxing Khums on other than Spoils of War

Question: Sunni jurists hold that it is only obligatory to tax khums[1] on spoils of war. Why do Shiite jurists say that this tax extends to other kinds of income besides spoils of war?

Response: Taxing khums on other kinds of income besides spoils of war is as obligatory as it is on spoils of war. The conditions pertaining to this have been explained in Shiite books of jurisprudence. We will now examine this issue in the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah:

The Holy Qur'ān states:

'*Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth of it is for Allah and the Apostle, for the relatives and the orphans, for the needy and the traveler, if you have faith in Allah and what We have sent down to Our servant on the day of Separation, the day when the two hosts met; and Allah has power over all things.*'[2]

Does the verse only pertain to spoils of war or has a wider and more comprehensive denotation? In order to provide an answer to this question, it is advisable to find out the literal meaning of the word *ghanam*.

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1. That is, one fifth of the spoils of war or contribution of one fifth of income paid by the Shiites.
2. *Sūrat al-Anfāl (The Spoils):* 41.

In books of jurisprudence, the word *ghanīmah* is often used to mean spoils of war, but this can not compel us to restrict the denotation of the above quoted verse to spoils of war. On the contrary, the generality of the verse in including every kind of income is authoritative proof for us.

Arab lexicographers have cited a wide range of meanings for the word *ghanīmah*, which do not only mean spoils of war. We will now cite some of these meanings:

1- Khalīl bin Ahmad Farāhīdī (b. 170 AH) says, 'Ghanīmah means whatever man earns without exerting effort.'[1]

2- Azharī says, 'Ghanam means earning something and ightinām means deriving benefit from ghanīmah.'[2]

3- Ibn Fārs says, '*Ghanam* does not have more than one root, which indicates earning something one did not previously have. It was only later that it was applied to spoils of war.'[3]

The above quoted statements of lexicographers suffice to prove our point.

Fortunately, the Holy Qur'ān has employed this term to mean 'benefit':

'*O you who have faith!*

When you issue forth in the way of Allah, try to ascertain: do not say to someone who offers you peace, "You are not

1. Kitāb al-'Ayn, 4/426.
2. Tahthīb al-Lughah, mādat ghanam.
3. Maqāis al-Lughah, mādat ghanam.

a believer," seeking the transitory wares of this world. Yet with Allah are plenteous gains (maghānim). You too were such earlier, but Allah did you a favor. Therefore, do ascertain. Allah is indeed well aware of what you do.'[1]

The sentence '*Yet with Allah are plenteous gains (maghānim)*' in the above quoted verse includes both the reward of this world and of the hereafter, even if it is not related to spoils of war. It can be asserted that it means the reward of the hereafter vis-à-vis '*transitory wares of this world'.*

In his book entitled Sunan, Ibn Mājah recounts that at the time of receiving zakāt, the Noble Prophet (s) said, 'O God! Bless the giver of this zakāt with more reward and profit and do not make him suffer loses.'[2]

Ahmad bin Hanbal transmits that the Noble Prophet (s) said, 'The profit derived from sessions of remembrance of Allah is heaven.'[3]

The clearest evidence that the above quoted verse does not only pertain to spoils of war is that jurists of the four schools of Islāmic law have demonstrated the necessity of paying khums from belongings that have been attained in instances other than war.

Taxing Khums on Mineral Resources

Khums on mineral resources is one of the obligatory Islāmic taxes. Hanafi jurists have demonstrated the

1. *Sūrat al-Nisā' (Women):* 94.
2. Sunan Ibn Mājah, Kitāb zakāt, Hadīth no. 1797.
3. Musnad Ahmad, 2/330, 374 and 524.

necessity of taxing khums on mineral resources on two sources:

1- The verse of spoils of war that has been quoted above.

2- The Noble Prophet's Hadīth which states, 'It is obligatory to tax khums on things that exist underground (whether they are mineral resources or treasures).'[1]

Examination of various books of Hadīth indicates that the above quoted prophetic statement has been recorded in many books of tradition.

Taxing Khums on Profits made from Trade

From the Shiite point of view, all of man's income is liable to khums taxation after deducting his yearly expenses. Of course there are other necessary conditions in regard to this issue; conditions whose discussing calls for more space than is available here. However, our aim is to prove that the Shiite point of view is perfectly compatible with the Hadīths which Sunnis have transmitted from the Noble Prophet (s). We will only cite a few of those traditions because there is no room to mention all that has been recounted in Sunni books here:

The Delegation of 'Abd al-Qays

The clan of 'Abd al-Qays used to live in an eastern area of Arabia. The head of this clan, by the name of 'Abd al-Qays, came to see the Noble Prophet (s) and said, 'There live polytheistic clans in the area between ours and yours

1. Al-Fiqh al-Islāmi wa Adillatah, 2/776; Musnad Ahmad, 1/314; Sunan Ibn Mājah, 2/839.

who prevent us from visiting you except during certain months in which fighting is prohibited. Please teach us what is necessary so that we may relate it to other people.' The Noble Prophet (s) said, 'I enjoin four things on you; have faith in Allah, bearing witness to His unity, perform the prayer, pay zakāt and khums.'[1]

There are two possibilities of what khums means in the above quoted Hadīth:

1- Spoils of war.

2- Permissible (*halāl*) income.

Definitely, it does not mean the first possibility because 'Abd al-Qays said that his clan did not have the ability to visit the Noble Prophet (s) save during certain months when fighting was prohibited. This means that crossing the area that was inhabited by polytheistic tribes would lead to their death. How can such people, who clearly state that they are not able to protect themselves from polytheists, be expected to take spoils of war? Besides this, jihād with the enemy without the Noble Prophet's (s) permission or that of his successor is not permissible.

One may imagine that khums in the above quoted Hadīth means possessions that are acquired through ambushes and plunder. This possibility is also not correct because the Noble Prophet (s) forbade any kind of plunder, and his statements in this regard have been recorded in Sunni books of Hadīth.[2]

1. Sahīh Bukhāri, 4/250; Sahīh Muslim, 1/35-36.
2. Al-Tāj al-Jāmi' lilusūl, 4/334, as quoted from Sahīh Bukhāri.

In this case, khums in the above quoted account would mean nothing else but what is taxed on man's permissible (*halāl*) income after he has deducted his yearly income.

Chapter Eight: Historical Issues

1- Imām Hassan's Peace Treaty with Mu'āwīyah

Question: Did Imām Hassan's peace treaty with Mu'āwīyah not show that there existed good relations between the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and Mu'āwiya?

Response: Imām Hassan's peace treaty with Mu'āwīyah is one of the historical events that took place during the early days of Islām about which researchers have held lots of discussions and written a lot of books and articles to clarify the truth. All of them have come to the conclusion that from the very first day, Imām Hassan ('a) was ready to rise and defend his caliphate and that peace and compromise had never been on his mind. That is why when he heard the news that Mu'āwīyah was advancing from Syria (Shām) to Kūfah, he ordered the people to gather in the Mosque and after making a speech, said that Mu'āwīyah had mobilized forces to attack Kūfah and called on the people to fight in the way of Allah and to resist the followers of falsehood. He also mentioned the need to be patient, to sacrifice and bear hardships in the way of Allah. Imām Hassan ('a) was worried lest the people refrain from responding affirmatively to his call because he was aware of the morale and spirit of his people. Coincidentally, after a passionate and arousing speech, everyone [in the Mosque] kept silent and no one responded affirmatively to Imām Hassan's ('a) call.

This scene was so regretful and shocking that one of Imām ‘Alī’s (‘a) bravest and most courageous companions who was present in the gathering rebuked the people for their weakness and impotence and called them false champions and cowards devoid of courage, and urged them to mobilize and get ready to fight the people of Syria alongside their Imām (‘a).[1]

This historical document shows to what extent the people of Iraq had become weak and apathetic to fighting, and had lost the courage to fight.

Finally, after efforts and speeches made by Imām Hassan’s (‘a) prominent companions, a number of people agreed to go with the Imām (‘a) from Kūfa to Nukhaylah. They stayed there for ten days, waiting and hoping to be joined by more people and forces, but only four thousand people gathered, altogether. It is for this very reason that Imām Hassan (‘a) was compelled to leave Nukhaylah and return to Kūfa. There, he began to make fresh arrangements and preparations for the war.[2]

Imām Hassan (‘a) was compelled to accept the imposed peace for three reasons:

1- The people of Iraq had been worn off by the wars of Jamal, Siffīn and Nahrawān.

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1. Abū al-Faraj Isfahāni, Maqātil al-Tālibīn, T 2, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Heydarīyah, 1385AH, /39; Ahmad bin Yahya al-Balāthuri, Ansab al-Ashraf, T 1/60; Tahqīq Shaykh Muhammad Bāqir Mahmudi, Beirūt, Dār al-Ma‘ārif lil matbū‘āt, 1397 AH, /32.
2. Āl Yā Sīn, Shaykh Rāzi, Sulh al-Hassan, T 2, Manshūrāt Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arāqiyah fi al-Kāzimiyah, /102.

2- There were people holding conflicting opinions in his army.

3- His army generals had betrayed him.

Imām Hassan ('a) explained these truths in one of his speeches:

I turned the government and leadership over to Mu'āwīyah because I had no loyal companions with whom to fight him. I would have fought him if I had companions. I know the people of Kūfa very well and I have tested them several times. They are corrupt people who will never be reformed; they are disloyal people who do not act upon their promises and no two people among them can reach an agreement. They apparently show loyalty and obedience to us but are actually on the side of our enemies.[1]

Imām Hassan ('a), who had gotten very sad by the apathy and disloyalty of his companions, gave a speech one day in which he said, 'I am very surprised by you, people who neither have faith nor shame. Woe unto you! Mu'āwīya will not fulfil any one of the promises he gave you regarding the rewards he will give you once I am killed. If I pay allegiance to Mu'āwīya, I will be able to discharge my personal duties better than I am able to today. But if he is made in charge of Muslim affairs, he will not let my grandfather's religion be enjoined and practiced in the society.

1. Majlisi, Bihār al-Anwār, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyah, 44/147; Tabarsi, Ihtijāj, Najaf, al-Maktba'ah al-Murtazawīyah /157.

I swear upon Allah that (on account of your apathy and disloyalty) I am compelled to turn over leadership of the Islamic society to Muʻāwīya. Know with certainty that you will not live under the reign of Bani Umayyah in peace and happiness and that you will be tortured and bothered greatly.

I can foresee a situation where your children will be lining up on their doors begging for bread and water, provisions which Allah had initially given to your children but which Bani Umayyah have gathered for themselves in their houses and are depriving their rightful owners of them.'

Then he added, 'If I had companions with whom to fight the enemy, I would never have entrusted the caliphate to Muʻāwiyah because this is forbidden (harām) for Bani Umayyah.'[1]

This speech reveals that:

Firstly, Imām Hassan (ʻa) was not ready or willing to make peace, but the lack of companions and the apathy of the people of Kūfa and other factors compelled him to make peace.

Secondly, his peace treaty does not indicate that there were good relations between the Ahl al-Bayt (ʻa) and Bani Ummayah.

1. Shubbar, Sayyid ʻAbdullah, Jala' al-Uyūn, Qūm, Maktabeye Basirati, 1/345-346.

2- Umm Kulthūm's Marriage with 'Umar bin Khattāb

Question: Does not the marriage of 'Umar with Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of Imām 'Alī ('a), prove that there were good relations between Imām 'Alī ('a) and 'Umar?

Response: The aforementioned question is not merely a historical querry but has an inseparable relation to Shiite beliefs regarding the caliphs. We previously clearly proved that after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s), the house of Fātimah Zahra ('a) was attacked. The first caliph even regretted having torched Fātima Zahra's ('a) door of the house…

How can one easily accept that the aggressor could have proposed marriage to the daughter of Fātimah Zahra ('a) and that the father (Imām 'Alī ('a)) had happily agreed to marry this daughter to such an aggressor?

It is for this reason that this issue, with its many aspects, has been the subject of discussion and research for more than a thousand years. We will only recount a few Shiite opinions and statements here because of the lack of space:

1- Shayikh Mufīd's Opinion

In a special article he wrote regarding this matter, Shaykh Mufīd (336-413 AH) has doubted its truthfulness and has said that the report about this marriage was recounted by Zubayr bin Bakkār, a man who can not be trusted,

especially, as he was one of the diehard enemies of Imām ‘Alī (‘a). Naturally, whatever he relates regarding Bani Hāshim is not reliable.

The reason for disseminating this report was that Hassan bin Yahyā ‘Alawī recounted it in his book entitled, *‘An-Nasab’*, and other people accepted this report because an ‘Alawī[1] had transmitted it.

Shaykh Mufīd, a master of Shiite beliefs, recounts the eccentric contradictions and weird discrepancies in this historical report and says that there are various accounts in this regard, such as:

1- ‘Alī (‘a) married her to ‘Umar.

2- That it was ‘Abbās, ‘Alī’s uncle, who married her to ‘Umar.

3- That this marriage was contracted under force and coercion.

4- That a wedding took place and ‘Umar had a son with her by the name of Zayd.

5- That the caliph was killed before the wedding.

6- Zayd also had a son.

7- He was killed before he had a child.

8- He and his mother were killed on the same day.

9- His mother was alive after his death.

10- Her dowry was forty thousand Dirhams.

11- Her dowry was four thousand Dirhams.

12- Her dowry was five hundred Dirhams.

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1. ‘Alawīs are the descendants of Imām ‘Alī (‘a).

These contradictions arouse doubts and misgivings and put this marriage under question.[1]

2- Umm Kulthūm was Imām 'Alī's (s) stepdaughter

Some writers believe that the Umm Kulthūm who got married to 'Umar was Imām 'Alī's (s) stepdaughter, not his real daughter. They say that Asma' bint 'Umays, who had been married to Ja'far bin Abī Tālib, got married to Abū Bakr after the death of Ja'far bin Abī Tālib and had a daughter by the name of Umm Kulthūm with Abū Bakr. She later got married to Imām 'Alī ('a) after the death of Abū Bakr and brought her daughter to Imām 'Alī's ('a) house. It was this stepdaughter of Imām 'Alī ('a) who got married to 'Umar bin Khattāb.

This opinion is not very strong, because it is true that Abū Bakr had a daughter by the name of Umm Kulthūm, but her mother was Habība the daughter of one of the Ansār called Zayd bin Khārijah. Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of Abū Bakr, got married to Talha bin 'Abdullah, with whom she had children by the names of Muhammad, Zakariah and Āisha. Abd al-Rahmān bin 'Abdullah married her after Talha got killed.

In short, Asma' bint 'Umays did not have more than one son with Abū Bakr, whose name was Muhammad bin Abū Bakr. Therefore, it can not be concluded that the Umm Kulthūm under discussion was the daughter that Abū Bakr had with a woman by the name of Qutaylah, who later got

1. Musnnifāt al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, /7, 86, 90.

married to Talha bin ‘Abdullah and not ‘Umar bin Khattāb.[1]

3- Various Reactions to the Marriage Proposal of the Caliph

The apparent reason why the caliph wanted to marry Umm Kulthūm was a Hadīth which he used to transmit from the Noble Prophet (s):

‘Every kind of relationship will be broken on the day of resurrection except the relationship with us.’[2]

Then the caliph said that he had lived with the Noble Prophet (s) for a long time and now he intended to establish this kind of relationship with him.

But deep in his heart he had other intentions; he wanted to make his past actions forgotten by establishing a family relationship with the household of the Noble Prophet (s). When he presented his marriage proposal, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) made various excuses to stop the marriage from happening.

He said, ‘The girl is still too young to marry.’

The caliph responded, ‘I swear upon Allah that you are just making excuses to stop this marriage from taking place, and we know the reason why.’

When ‘Umar once again insisted on his marriage proposal, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) made other excuses. According to what has been written in Sunni books, the marriage finally took place and the one who took charge

1. Usd al-Ghābah, /395.
2. Al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā, 8/463.

of it was 'Abbās bin 'Abd al-Muttalib, Imām 'Alī's ('a) uncle. But the question is that did the family of the bride willingly agree to this marriage or was there internal and external pressure and coercion exerted on them to agree?

You can infer the answer to this question by briefly referring to your inner conscience and see whether this marriage was willingly agreed to:

1- There is not the least doubt that relations between the family of the Noble Prophet (s) got completely strained and tense when the second caliph attacked the household of the Messenger of Allah (s), and this event can not be refuted. There is definite evidence, some of which we have already adduced in a response to one of the questions, to prove it.

2- 'Umar was a violent and rough man. When the first caliph appointed him as his successor, a number of the Noble Prophet's (s) companions complained and said, 'Are you making a violent and rough man predominant over us?'

3- Tabari has written, 'The caliph initially presented his marriage proposal to Umm Kulthūm, Abū Bakr's daughter, but she refused to marry him because of his violent and rough nature.'[1]

Therefore, this marriage can be construed as a sign of the existence of good relations between the second caliph and the household of the Noble Prophet (s).

What can be inferred from Shiite sources and documents is that only the marriage contract took place and nothing

1. Tārīkh Tabarī, 5/58.

else. Even Imām Sādiq (‘a) has said, ‘When ‘Umar died, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (‘a) brought his daughter back home.’[1]

Mas‘ūdi has written, ‘’Umar did not have a child from this marriage.’[2]

A lot of historians and biographers have written issues in regard to this event; issues which do not conform to the noble status of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Besides this, their sources are considered as altered and falsifiied ones, and that is why we have refrained from relating them here.

1. Kāfi, 6/115.
2. Murūj al-Thahab, 2/321.

Chapter Nine:
The Companions of the Noble Prophet (s)

1- Hadīths related by the Noble Prophet's (s) Companions

Question: Why do Shiites not accept Hadīths related by the companions of the Noble Prophet (s)?

Response: Hadīths that have been transmitted from the Noble Prophet (s) can be divided into three categories:

1- Hadīths narrated by several sources.

2- Hadīths which on the basis of contextual clues provide beneficial knowledge.

3- Hadīths recounted by a single transmitter.

All rational people of the world act upon the first two categories of Hadīths, and never at all take into consideration the condition and situation of the narrator because from the viewpoint of strength and power, the Hadīth provides knowledge which can not be doubted and distrusted at all.

But what is a Hadīths transmitted by several narrators and what conditions does it have? And what is a Hadīth which on the basis of contextual clues provides beneficial knowledge?

This has been discussed in the science of the principles of Islāmic jurisprudence and the science of contextual study of Hadīths and/or Scripture. The Shiites too, like all rational people of the world, act upon these two kinds of Hadīths.

The question pertains to the third category of Hadīths:

Hadīths recounted by a single transmitter are devoid of value because they do not provide desirable results in ideological issues, whose goal is to bring about faith and belief. But if the Hadīth is related to religious laws and scientific issues, the Shiites act on it whenever the chain of transmitters consists of just, virtuous and pious people. In this regard, there is no difference between the Noble Prophet's (s) companions and their immediate successors. But if one of the transmitters is weak and mistrusted, such a Hadīth is not authoritative and can not be relied upon. This same condition applies and holds true with respect to Hadīths that have been transmitted from the household of the Noble Prophet (s).

Fortunately, there are some Hadīths at our disposal that have been transmitted through authentic chains of transmission. A part of these traditions have been transmitted from the Noble Prophet (s) by the Ahl al-Bayt (ʻa) and another part by reliable and pious transmitters, and Shiites act upon all these traditions.

What has been mentioned in the question above is nothing more than an imagination. Some of the Hadīths that have been acted upon by Shiite jurists have been transmitted in Sahīh Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim, as well as other authentic Sunni books of traditions. What is important is that the chain of transmission should not be disputable.

Finally, we have to say that from the viewpoint of our jurisprudence, people who hate and hold grudges against the household of the Noble Prophet (s) are faithless and untrustworthy, but unfortunately, this criterion has been overlooked in some books of tradition. For example,

'Umrān bin Hattān, the leader of the Kharijites and who in our opinion is unreliable, is found in the chains of transmission that have been recorded in Sahīh Bukhāri and other books of Sunni traditions.

2- Criticizing the Companions of the Noble Prophet (s)

Question: Why do Shiites criticize some of the companions of the Noble Prophet (s) despite that this weakens the religion because it is through these people that religion reached us?

Response: Such talk is not based on acceptable grounds. People who say this think that all the traditions transmitted by the companions of the Noble Prophet (s) are disputable and unacceptable, whereas the truth is quite the opposite.

We previously said that the companions of the Noble Prophet (s), just like their immediate successors, are divided into two categories: pious and impious, acceptable and unacceptable. Not accepting the traditions of the second category of the Noble Prophet's (s) companions does not mean that all of them are viewed with distrust and thus have lost their reliability.

Besides this, we have at our disposal traditions of the Noble Prophet (s) that have been transmitted by the infallible leaders, that is to say, Imām ʻAlī bin Abī Tālib (ʻa) and his household, who themselves are among the most prominent companions of the Messenger of Allah (s). Also, not accepting traditions transmitted by weak or obscure and umbiguous people does not mean that all Hadīths transmitted by companions of the Noble

Prophet (s) are refuted and this does not weaken the religion because the Noble Prophet (s) left two invaluable authorities for the Islāmic community, and holding fast to these two renders the Islāmic community needless of any other authority.

Basically, this question is very surprising. The asker, instead of making the foundations of religion firm and strong, says that the religion gets weakened if companions of the Noble Prophet (s) are criticized. How can a religion founded by Allah and enforced by the Noble Prophet (s) be weakened by criticizing a few people. Allah has promised to preserve this religion up to the day of resurrection.

3- Imām ‘Alī (‘a) and Confirming the Caliphs

Question: What is the reason why you Shiites refute the caliphate of the caliphs despite Imām ‘Alī (‘a) having approved and endorsed them?

Response: Imām ‘Alī’s (‘a) relationship with the caliphs ought to be examined in two domains:

1- Official recognition of their caliphate.

2- Imām ‘Alī’ (‘a) cooperating with the caliph in solving religious and political problems.

We affirm with all certainty and conviction that Imām ‘Alī’s (‘a) position was completely negative in regard to the first instance and positive in regard to the second.

Regarding the reasons why we say that his position with respect to the first instance was completely negative is that:

Firstly, how could Imām ‘Alī (‘a) officially recognise the caliphate of other people whereas he himself had on various accasions, and especially on the day of Ghadīr, been appointed by Allah to be the guardian and leader of the Muslims? The guardianship of Imām ‘Alī (‘a) was a Divine Command which can not be changed by anyone save Allah:

‘*A faithful man or woman may not, when Allah and His Apostle have decided on a matter, have any option in their*

matter, and whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle has certainly strayed into manifest error.’[1]

The Imamate of Imām ‘Alī (‘a) was not his personal right that he could waive aside. Rather, it was a divine injunction which no one could change. But if conditions are such that execution of this injunction is impossible, the common good demands that Imām ‘Alī (‘a) should keep quiet about his right, not that he should officially choose someone else to take up the caliphate.

Secondly, the history of Saqīfah and the study of the life of Imām ‘Alī (‘a) indicates that despite the intensity of the pressure that was exerted on him, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) did not extend his hand to pay allegiance to the caliphs.

In one of his letters to Imām ‘Alī (‘a), Mu‘āwiyah writes, ‘You are the one who was pulled like a bridled camel to [go and] pay allegiance.’ This sentence indicates that there was so much pressure exerted on Imām ‘Alī (‘a) that he was forcibly taken out of his house and led to the Mosque to pay allegiance.

In his reply to Mu‘āwiyah, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) does not refute this defamatory remark, but instead explicitly states that this is a sign of how oppressed he was. He says:

‘You said that I was pulled like a bridled camel to go and pay allegiance. How surprising! I swear by Allah that you wanted to rebuke me but instead praised me. You intended to defame me but you yourself have instead got defamed. It is not a weakness for a Muslim to be oppressed, as long

1. *Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Confederates):* 36.

as he does not hold doubts about his religion and his certainty.'[1]

Thirdly, in his book of traditions, Bukhārī has written about the political agreement that prevailed in his era. In a book entitled 'Maghāzī', he has related from Āishah that Fātimah, the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s), sent a person to Abū Bakr asking him to return three things:

1- Her inheritance from the Noble Prophet (s).

2- Fadak.

3- What had remained of the booty from Khaybar.

Abū Bakr responded, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah say, "We never leave anything as inheritance. Whatever we leave behind is charity." Therefore, the household of the Noble Prophet (s) will be provided for from this same property.' Āishah says that Fātimah was very angry with Abū Bakr's negative response and never spoke with him again. She lived for six months after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (s).

Fātimah's husband 'Alī ('a) buried her at night when she died and he never informed Abū Bakr about her death, and he did not pay allegiance to Abū Bakr as long as Fātimah ('a) was alive.[2]

The aforementioned Hadīth indicates that Fātimah ('a) passed away without paying allegiance to Abū Bakr and that Imām 'Alī ('a) did not pay allegiance to Abū Bakr until after six months. If Abū Bakr's caliphate was legal according to divine law and, in technical terms, he was

1. Nahj al-Balāgha, letter no. 28.
2. Sahīh Bukhārī, bāb Ghazwah Khaybar, Hadīth no. 4241.

fully qualified for the office of the caliphate, why did the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s) not pay allegiance to him and why did Imām ‘Alī (‘a) not pay allegiance to him for as long as Fātimah (‘a) was alive?

There is in this respect a kind of contradiction from the standpoint of Sunni fundamentals because on the one hand, [Sunni] historians maintain that the daughter of the Noble Prophet (s) never paid allegiance to Abū Bakr for as long as she was alive. They even say that she did not even speak with him until the last breath of her life. Imām ‘Alī (‘a) too did not pay allegiance to Abū Bakr for as long as his dear wife was alive, and only did so six months after the event of the Saqīfah.[1]

On the other hand, they have narrated in the authentic books of tradition that whoever dies without paying allegiance to the Imām of his era has in fact died the death of the time of ignorance.

In his Sahīh, Muslim has thus recounted:

‘Whoever dies without paying allegiance to their Imām has died the death of the time of ignorance.’[2]

Also, Ahmad bin Hanbal has thus narrated in his Musnad:

‘Whoever dies without knowing the Imām of his era has died the death similar to that of people who lived during the age of ignorance.’[3]

Now, how can we affirm these two statements?

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1. Sahīh Bukhārī, kitāb farz al-khums, Hadīth 3093.
2. Sahīh Muslim, /58/ bāb amārah/ Hadīth 88.
3. Musnad Ahmad, 2/96.

On the one hand, Fātimah Zahra's (ʻa) happiness and pleasure is the criterion of Allah's happiness, and her anger is His anger, and she is also the leader of the women of paradise,[1] indicating that she is pure and infallible.

On the other hand, she did not pay allegiance to the caliph of her era, and met her Lord in this state.

Now this contradiction has to be solved in one way or another:

1- Fātimah Zahra's (ʻa) death, which is a criterion of divine pleasure and anger, not forgetting that she is the leader of the women of paradise, was the death of the age of ignorance (may Allah forbid).

2- The caliph of her era was not the legiutimate Imām and he had usurped the position of the caliphate. The legitimate Imām was that very man who had been explicitly appointed to the caliphate in the land of Ghadīr and to whom Fātimah Zahra (ʻa) had paid her allegiance from the first day and whom she had supported with all her might and strength for as long as she was alive.

Fourthly, Imām ʻAlī's (ʻa) words on various instances indicate that he considered himself as the rightful and legitimate caliph up to the last days of his life and that this indisputable right of his had wrongfully been usurped from him. In this regard, apart from the sermon of Shaqshaqiyah, with which we are all acquinted, there are other statements of his which denote that the caliphate had been usurped from him and that he had been forced to

1. Mustadrak Hākim, 3/156.

relinquish his right. We will hereunder adduce some of these statements:

‘By Allah I have been continually deprived of my right from the day the Prophet (s) died till today.’[1]

Someone said to me, ‘O son of Abū Tālib! You are eager for the caliphate.’ Then I told him, ‘Rather, you are, by Allah, more greedy, although more remote, while I am more suited and nearer. I have demanded it as my right, while you are intervening between me and it, and you are turning my face from it.’ When I knocked his ears with arguments among the crowd of those present he was startled as if he was stunned not knowing what reply to give me about it.

O my Allah! I seek Thy succour against the Quraysh and those who are assisting them, because they are denying me the rights of kinship, have lowered my high position, and are united in opposing me in the matter of the caliphate which is my right, and then they said, “Know that the right thing is that you have it and also that you may leave it.”[2]

It is not clear who the protester was and when he had made this protest. Ibn Abī al-Hadīd says, ‘The protester was Sa‘d Waqqās, and he made this protest of the day of the assembly (*shūrā*). But the Imamate Shiites say that the protester was Abū Ubayda and that he made his protest on the day of Saqīfah.’

1. Nahj al-Balāgha, sermon no. 6.
2. Ibid, sermon no. 171.

It has so far become clear that Imām ʻAlī (ʻa) had never compromised his right and he never made any concessions with the caliphs. Instead, he was always complaining that he had been wrongfully oppressed and he used to see to it that future generations were informed of this truth.

The second point is related to his cooperation with the caliphs in solving religious and political issues. We will hereunder quote his statement expressing the reason why he did this:

ʻI therefore withheld my hand till I saw that many people were reverting from Islām and trying to destroy the religion of Muhammad (s). I, then, feared that if I did not protect Islām and its people, and there occurred in it a breach or destruction, it would mean a greater blow to me than the loss of power over you. That power was, in any case, to last a few days, after which everything would pass away like a mirage passess away, or as a cloud scuds away. Therefore, in these happenings I rose till wrong was destroyed and disappeared, and religion attained peace and safety.ʼ[1]

This letter clearly explains that Imām ʻAlī (ʻa) criticized the caliphs, nonetheless, he cooprerated with them in religious, academic and political affairs to the best of his ability for the sake of Islām.

1. Ibid, letter no. 62.